

THE INFLUENCE OF THE GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT  
IN FIFE, 1914-23 : WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE  
TO ROSYTH

Susan Gleave

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The influence of the Garden City Movement in Fife, 1914-23.  
with particular reference to Rosyth.

Susan Gleave.

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### Synopsis.

This thesis is divided into sixteen chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the origins and development of the Garden City Movement, detailing Howard's original vision of a Garden City, the consequent popularising of his theories and the formation of the Garden City Association; also the large amount of literature published during the early 20th century on housing design, and the theories of Raymond Unwin. The chapter concludes by identifying signs of reaction against "Garden City" values, occurring slightly before the outbreak of the First World War.

Chapters 2 to 9 detail the development of the Garden City at Rosyth, created for the Admiralty employees at the new Naval Base around 1915. The Garden City Association's enthusiastic anticipation of a model town, their subsequent disillusion due to the long delays in negotiations between the Admiralty and the Local Government Board for Scotland are documented in detail and followed by an account of the building operations by the Scottish National Housing Company Ltd., and further negotiations regarding the housing at Rosyth.

Chapter 10 deals with the legislation and the designs for state-aided housing at the end of the First World War. The findings of the Royal Commission on housing in Scotland, of 1917, and the recommendations of numerous Government Committees concerning the provision of such housing are detailed, and followed by a summary of legislation passed on this subject between 1919 and 1923.

Chapters 11 to 15 focus on the post-war housing schemes at Dunfermline, Inverkeithing, Kirkcaldy, Buckhaven and Methil, and Leven.

Chapter 16 provides a final and concluding assessment of the impact of the Garden City Movement, first of all at Rosyth, and then in the above post-war housing schemes. The difficulties of putting Garden City ideals

into practice are discussed, and the economic and theoretical reasons for the reduction of many of the schemes, and the growing tendency towards standardisation, are identified.

## Introduction.

This thesis concerns the impact of the Garden City Movement in Fife from 1914 to 1923. Owing to the needs of this particular period, reference has been heavily biased towards working-class developments. Prior to 1914, the building trade had steadily declined, resulting in a serious shortage of working-class houses, especially in Scotland. It was during the years herein discussed that the provision of working-class housing took priority, a great initiative being launched by the Government to build the necessary houses.

During the First World War, the Local Government Board for Scotland was responsible for a number of housing schemes for employees of the Admiralty and the Ministry of Munitions, including Rosyth, Greenock, Gourock, Cambuslang and Gretna. Rosyth was perhaps the first, and was certainly the largest of these schemes, and was unique in that the construction of the new dockyard necessitated an entire town to be built for the incoming Admiralty employees and their families. Rosyth was intended to be a "Garden City", and was indeed the first fairly large-scale venture of this kind in Scotland.

Despite the importance of Rosyth in the development of Scottish housing, the history of its creation has not previously been fully researched. For this reason, the chapters concerning Rosyth provide a detailed documentation of the early negotiations for the proposed "Garden City", and the consequent planning and building of the town. A large section of the documentation concerns the many problems and lengthy negotiations prior to any construction work taking place. It has been necessary to devote such a large amount of space to these problems and negotiations, as they demonstrate the immense difficulties of transforming Howard's vision of an ideal Garden City into reality.

By the end of the First World War, Britain's severe housing shortage became a major political issue, resulting in Lloyd George's campaign for the provision of "Homes fit for Heroes". Many principles of town planning and housing design which had been associated with the Garden City Movement were reiterated in the subsequent Government publications concerning the provision of state-assisted working-class housing.

Rosyth links up with the later chapters in that the L.G.B.S. schemes carried out during the war formed the basis for the Board's later recommendations for local authorities in the preparation of their post-war housing schemes.

The various housing schemes constituting the later chapters have again not been previously fully researched, thus these chapters also take the form of a detailed documentation. These schemes were to a varying degree planned according to Garden City-derived principles, notably a low density of houses per acre, curving roads and the provision of trees and open spaces. The houses themselves, having a minimum of three apartments, provided a great improvement in accommodation when compared to the overcrowded tenements and one and two-roomed houses which were hitherto so prevalent in Scotland.

## Chapter 1.

### The Development of the Garden City Movement.

"The cottage and the small house are the distinctive Garden City types of building, and of these the workman's cottage is by no means the least interesting. When we come to think of it there is no reason why it should lack interest. Think how much of the charm of our English villages is due to the cottages of labourers and farm workers, and you will realise that there is no need for the inexpressibly hideous erections in which the working population of our towns is housed. The old cottages of our countryside... contain what is most vital in our English architecture, and wherever they are found they are a delight. Our modern building is somehow strangely different. The houses built for working people are so mean, and the aggregation of them is so horrible, that no one cares to be near them. They are not only hideous and badly built, but they destroy whatever beauty the land on which they are placed may have had. Wherever they are, in town or country, they are an offence to God and man. The heritage of ugliness left by the nineteenth century is in nothing more abominable than in the industrial dwellings, tenements, and 'fowl houses' in which the mass of the people is housed."

C.B.Purdom, The Garden City, 1913.

The increasing awareness of such housing conditions as referred to above, and the pressing need for reform, led to the formation of the Garden City Movement; the ideals of which were later, to a certain extent, to be incorporated in the design of state housing. This chapter will deal with the origin of the Garden City Movement, its aims and its theories, particularly those of Raymond Unwin; and also with the increasing interest in the housing problem around the turn of the century, as shown by the vast amount of literature published on housing design.

Throughout the 19th century, conditions of working class housing in Britain had become a cause for increasing concern; the problems of overcrowding, lack of hygiene and appalling standards of accommodation had led to epidemics spreading through towns, cities and rural areas alike. As well as disease, crime and vice thrived in the urban slums, directly related to the insanitary, overcrowded conditions. Legislation such as the

Public Health Act of 1875, was introduced, the object being "primarily to prevent or destroy insanitary housing conditions rather than to create good conditions."<sup>2</sup> From the mid-19th century onwards, various 'model housing' schemes were developed by philanthropic societies, often having little success, partly due to the drab uniformity of the buildings, which frequently had a barracks-like appearance. Housing reformers such as Octavia Hill, sought to improve the housing situation mainly by attempting to reform the tenants themselves. Despite these various efforts, the housing problem remained on a massive scale.

#### Howard's Garden City.

By the late 19th century, theories of social reform had become increasingly popular, in accordance with an increasing dissatisfaction with urban dwelling and the way in which towns were spreading, rapidly obliterating the countryside. It was the publication of Ebenezer Howard's book: Tomorrow - A Peaceful Path to Real Reform, in 1898, which proved to be the catalyst for a different approach to such problems. Reprinted in 1902 under the new title Garden Cities of Tomorrow, Howard's book popularised the idea of 'Garden Cities' which would combine the better aspects of town and country dwelling.

In the introduction, Howard stated:

"There is, however, a question in regard to which one can scarcely find any difference of opinion. It is wellnigh universally accepted by men of all parties, not only in England, but all over Europe and America and our colonies, that it is deeply to be deplored that the people should continue to stream into the already over-crowded cities, and should thus further deplete the country districts."<sup>3</sup>

By an illustration of three magnets, Howard showed the relative advantages and disadvantages of living in the town and in the country, and the improved combination offered by the "Town-Country Magnet". The town,



although offering chances of employment, high wages and social opportunity, also held the disadvantages of the closing out of nature, excessive working hours, an 'army' of unemployed, as well as 'foul air' and a 'murky sky'. The country, despite its fresh air, nature and sunshine, suffered from, among other things, a lack of drainage, lack of amusement and a need for reform. Howard's solution, the "Town-Country Magnet", i.e. the Garden City, was to offer beauty of nature, social opportunity, easy access to fields and parks, low rents, high wages, "pure air and water, good drainage, bright homes and gardens, no smoke, no slums, freedom" and co-operation.<sup>4</sup> The Garden City would thereby solve the problems of urban congestion and rural depopulation.

The combination of town and country was not intended to result in "a loose indefinite sprawl of individual houses with immense open spaces over the whole landscape",<sup>5</sup> as the form of the Garden City was to be rigidly defined. The city was to consist of 1000 acres, and would be prevented from spreading by an agricultural belt of 5000 acres. Howard saw that limiting population was essential to controlling the size of cities, and set a maximum population limit of 32,000. When the population became likely to exceed this limit, a further Garden City could be created some distance away.

The city was to be planned in an ordered manner with central public buildings surrounded by a park, followed by rings of houses and gardens, with a railway and factories on the edge of the agricultural belt. Howard's diagrams showed a formalised, geometric lay-out with wide avenues and boulevards; however, Howard strongly emphasised that these diagrams were merely suggestions which would probably be much departed from in practice,<sup>6</sup> also that the plan must depend on the site selected for the city.<sup>7</sup>

The entire revenue of the Garden City was to be derived from rents, which would be used to pay the interest on the initial price of the estate, to provide a sinking fund for paying off the principal, to provide for construction and maintenance works, and also to provide a large surplus for purposes such as old-age pensions or insurance.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the prevailing 19th century emphasis on the importance of nature, as expressed by writers such as Ruskin, and on a return to a rustic way of life, as expressed by Morris, Howard's Garden City was not simply a romanticised retreat into the country, instead, the combined town and country elements were to complement each other, resulting in a more healthy and successful town, with an improved agricultural industry. The agricultural belt, as well as preventing an increase in the size of the town, would also be sufficient to feed the population. The factories were to be placed near the agricultural belt so that the workers could have full enjoyment of the open air. In his chapter The Town - Country Magnet, Howard wrote of the Garden City:

"Its object is, in short, to raise the standard of health and comfort of all true workers of whatever grade - the means by which these objects are to be achieved being a healthy, natural, and economic combination of town and country life, and this on land owned by the municipality."<sup>11</sup>

Howard's proposals were by no means completely original, there was certainly a number of important influences on his work. One of these was James Silk Buckingham's book National Evils and Practical Remedies, published in 1849, which described a model city named Victoria, with many similarities to Howard's Garden City.<sup>12</sup> Another example was Dr. Benjamin Ward Richardson's Hygeia: or, a City of Health of 1876, proposing a community, guided by scientific knowledge in sanitary reform, which would have "the lowest possible general mortality with the highest possible individual longevity."<sup>13</sup> Edward Bellamy's utopia Looking Backward 2000-

1887, published in Boston in 1888, was a further source of inspiration to Howard, as may have been William Morris's utopian vision News from Nowhere of 1890. The great difference between these earlier plans and ideas and those of Howard was that only Howard's Garden City was actually put into practice.

Howard's book soon attracted a good deal of interest. He gave lectures on his subject all over the country<sup>12</sup> with the result that the Garden City Association was formed on June 10th, 1899, with T.W.H. Idris, a mineral water manufacturer, as chairman.<sup>13</sup> The objectives of the Association were:

"To promote the discussion of the project suggested by Mr. Ebenezer Howard in 'Tomorrow' and ultimately to formulate a practical scheme on the lines of that project, with such modifications as may appear desirable."<sup>14</sup>

The aims of the Garden City Association were gradually expanded, in July 1903 they were approved as follows:

"To promote the relief of overcrowded and congested areas to secure a wider distribution of the population over the land, and to advance the moral, intellectual and physical development of the people by -

a) Taking initial steps to establish Garden Cities in which the inhabitants shall become in a corporate capacity the owners of sites, subject to the fullest recognition of individual as well as public interest;

b) Encouraging the tendency of manufacturers and others to move from crowded centres to rural districts, co-operating with such manufacturers and with public bodies in securing healthy housing accommodation for the work people in proximity to the places of employment;

c) Co-operating with other organisations in promoting legislation to enlarge the powers of public authorities with a view to securing a solution of the housing problem and improved systems of communication;

d) Stimulating interest in and promoting the scientific development of towns so that the evils arising from the haphazard growth may in future be avoided;

e) Promoting the erection of sanitary and beautiful dwellings with adequate space for gardens and recreation."<sup>15</sup>

Within a few years, the emphasis of the Association turned more towards town-planning, consequently the name of the Association was changed in 1907 to the 'Garden Cities and Town Planning Association'. In 1908, the title of

the Association's journal, started in 1904, was changed from The Garden City to Garden Cities and Town Planning. The aims of the Association were amended in 1909 as follows:

- "a) To promote town-planning.
- b) To advise on, draw up schemes for, and establish Garden Cities, Garden Suburbs and Garden Villages.
- c) Housing and the improvement of its sanitation.
- d) The collection and publication of information as to the above.
- e) The education of public opinion by lantern lectures, cheap literature, conferences, for example
- f) The influencing and promotion of legislation
- g) The improvement of local by-laws."<sup>16</sup>

#### Raymond Unwin and the Development of Letchworth Garden City.

As a result of the Association's efforts, in June 1902 the Garden City Pioneer Company, Ltd. was formed. The Letchworth estate was purchased in the following year, and in September 1903 the First Garden City Ltd was incorporated. A garden city following Howard's proposals was to be built on the estate, the aims of which were stated by the company thus:

"The Garden City project is not merely an aesthetic idea to provide gardens, nor to force better habits on the people. It is an attempt to secure justice for the people by constitutional means, by diverting the increment of value attached to the land into the pockets of those who create that value. It will help them to educate themselves. It is an experiment of the first magnitude in effective social reform."<sup>17</sup>

The architects Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin won the competition for the post of planners for Letchworth, and began work in January 1904.<sup>18</sup> Parker and Unwin had previously been involved in the design of New Earswick, a model village created by the manufacturer Joseph Rowntree. New Earswick followed the tradition of various industrial model villages formed by manufacturers for their workers since the mid 19th century. The architectural style of the houses at New Earswick, as at Letchworth and other Garden City developments, was derived from the Arts and Crafts designs of the 19th century, based on Old English vernacular cottages.

Before discussing the design of Letchworth, it is first of all necessary to look at some of Unwin's writings concerning aspects of planning and housing design. It will be seen that many of Unwin's theories were to be reflected in Letchworth Garden City.

Parker and Unwin's architectural partnership was formed in 1896, both men were strongly influenced by William Morris's socialism, and accordingly developed an approach to design based on straight-forward simplicity and good construction, free from unnecessary ornamentation. Following the tradition of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the interior design of a house was to be considered before the exterior, practicality being a fundamental aspect of the architects' designs. From the late 1890's onwards, Parker and Unwin published various books and papers demonstrating their theories. These writings proved to be essential to the development and popularising of the Garden City idea, and as will be seen later, to the subsequent design of state-assisted housing.

Raymond Unwin's Fabian Tract Cottage Plans and Common Sense, published in 1902, was the precursor for many books on cottage design in the early years of the 20th century. According to Mervyn Miller<sup>12</sup>, the paper marked an important advance for the literature on the design of working class housing. It set out a rational approach to housing design, and the layout of houses, demonstrating Unwin's interpretation of Garden City housing.

The article began with these words:

"How to provide for the Housing of the People is a problem for which our larger municipalities are now being compelled to find some solution; and all over the country these bodies are busy preparing plans for housing schemes. Social reformers are generally agreed that the people must be housed outside the congested town areas; many, like the Garden City Association, advocating the creation of entirely new towns. ...It is taken that the best policy for the municipalities is to build attractive cottages on the outskirts of their towns, always having due regard to the reasonable accessibility from these houses of places of employment and centres of interest and amusement."<sup>13</sup>

In a section entitled 'Air and Sunlight', Unwin discussed an aspect of design which was to be of great importance to his housing plans, having been grossly neglected in the majority of 19th century working-class houses. Unwin strongly insisted:

"Into as many more of the rooms as possible let the sun come, but let no house be built with a sunless living-room: and this condition must cease to be regarded merely as desirable when it can conveniently be arranged: it must be insisted upon as an absolute essential, second only to air-space: other things must, if need be, give way before it."<sup>21</sup>

A definite advantage which would result from this emphasis on sunlight would, believed Unwin, be the abolition of "back yards, back alleys and other such abominations;<sup>22</sup> these unattractive features had been created by the parallel rows of standard bye-law housing, occurring mainly in England. Unwin again forcefully expressed his views on such back yards:

"It does not seem to be realised that thousands of thousands of working women spend the bulk of their lives with nothing better to look on than the ghastly prospect offered by these back yards, the squalid ugliness of which is unrelieved by a scrap of fresh green to speak of spring, or a fading leaf to tell of autumn."<sup>23</sup>

A further vital element of Garden City planning was that of open spaces. Unwin stressed that a certain amount of space was necessary for each house, and suggested that instead of this space being wasted by yards and back streets, the space available for a number of houses could be kept together, where it could make a "respectable square or garden". These spaces could then determine the layout of the houses, by having the houses grouped around the open spaces thus forming quadrangles opening into each other, with wide streets at intervals. By this means every house could be planned so as to have a sunny aspect for the main rooms and a "pleasant outlook both front and back".<sup>24</sup>

Unwin strongly objected to the common practice of designing narrow houses with long back projections, instead he advocated the adoption of

self-contained houses, which he demonstrated to be more economical as well as being far more attractive.

Most of the remaining sections of the article concerned the internal planning of the cottage, with an emphasis on practicality. Unwin made it clear that "cottages must fit the life of the occupants".<sup>25</sup> The living-room, which would generally be the most thoroughly used of all the rooms, took priority. In planning any cottage, the first consideration, according to Unwin, was to provide "a roomy, convenient, and comfortable living-room".<sup>26</sup> The length of the room was recommended to be no less than 15 feet, and in planning the room the placing of the furniture was to be well considered. Bay windows were also recommended. Bedrooms were to be as large and well-ventilated as possible, and a larder and scullery were to be provided. The next consideration was the parlour, of which Unwin argued:

"However desirable a parlour may be, it cannot be said to be necessary to health or family life; nor can it be compared in importance with those rooms and offices which we have been considering. There can be no possible doubt that until any cottage has been provided with a living-room large enough to be healthy, comfortable and convenient, it is worse than folly to take space from that living-room, where it will be used every day and every hour, to form a parlour, where it will only be used once or twice a week."<sup>27</sup>

Unwin's recommendation concerning parlours, however, was to cause much discussion, and was certainly not always popular, as the majority of working-class people tended to view the parlour as a highly desirable, indeed important, part of their houses.

As regards the provision of baths, where it was not possible to include these in a bedroom, Unwin recommended that the bathroom should be adjacent to the scullery, or even in the scullery; this arrangement was to occur in a great number of Garden City houses. A further recommendation, one which reflected Unwin's emphasis on co-operation within a village community, was that of the provision of communal amenities for the benefit of the tenants,

for example laundries, reading-rooms, baths and "even the common kitchen would be matters only of time and the growth of self-restraint, and the co-operative spirit".<sup>28</sup>

To return to the design of Letchworth, Parker and Unwin were responsible for the layout plan and also some of the houses. The town was divided into two parts by the railway which ran through the middle of the estate. To the south of the railway lay the town centre with its municipal buildings, upon which a number of straight roads converged. The streets were edged with broad areas of grass and flowering trees, with houses, generally semi-detached or in short terraced blocks, set well back from the roads. The residential and industrial areas of the town were again divided by a main road, the factories and the workmen's cottages lying to the east of the town.

The town's housing was erected by various cottage companies, as well as by private individuals. Apart from the main company involved in the town, First Garden City Limited, the cottage companies included Garden City Tenants Ltd., Letchworth Cottages and Buildings Ltd., the Howard Cottage Society Ltd., and Letchworth Housing Society Ltd. In addition to the above, cottages were provided by Hitchin Rural District Council and the publishers J.M.Dent and Sons Ltd.<sup>29</sup>

A good deal of the housing catered for the middle classes, however, a main objective for Letchworth was to achieve a marked improvement in housing, especially for the working classes. Thus the cottages were built in pleasant streets with trees and gardens, and were planned to allow for the maximum of sunlight and fresh air.<sup>30</sup> All the cottages had gardens of an average size of 1/12 of an acre. Unwin's recommendations as expressed in Cottage Plans and Common Sense came into effect in the design and layout of the cottages. The deep back projection which Unwin detested was entirely absent from Letchworth cottages, the backs of the houses instead of looking out on a dismal yard, faced a pleasant terrace, and each street had open



spaces between every four or six houses, thereby avoiding the monotony of a long, solid terrace, and also giving access to the backs of the cottages.<sup>31</sup>

The standards adopted for the interiors of the cottages were as follows: A minimum living-room of at least 144 square feet, containing a range and a dresser; a scullery containing a gas stove, sink, copper and coal-place; a larder placed on the least sunny side, with a window; a modern w.c.; and three bedrooms. The scullery would also contain a full-sized bath, and in some cases the cottages would only have two bedrooms. Alternative cottages of a similar standard, however with a very small parlour, also cottages with larger rooms, a parlour and separate bathroom were also provided. All types of cottage had a hot water supply from a boiler behind the kitchen range, and space for bicycles and garden tools.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the growing reputation of Letchworth and the Garden City Movement for individual aesthetically attractive houses, C.B.Purdom, in his book The Garden City, emphasised that this was not the main aim of the town. He wrote:

"The idea of the promoters of the Garden City was not to build an artistic town. Their intention was to effect the improvement of individual housing. They were not artists, but reformers, men and women who wished to see a clean, healthy, and sanitary place, where men might live and work under decent conditions. Their whole idea was to build a town in which the best possible physical conditions for a community might be secured. They were not in the least pre-occupied with questions of aesthetics. As Mr. Raymond Unwin himself said, 'we must first see that our citizens are decently housed.'<sup>33</sup>

Nonetheless, the aesthetic aspect of the town was certainly not ignored. Purdom explained that before development commenced in 1904, the Garden City Company issued a pamphlet to intending builders, mentioning certain means by which beauty might be secured to buildings in the town. The pamphlet stated:

"The directors of First Garden City, Ltd., are convinced that the high standard of beauty, which they desire to attain in Garden City, can

only result from simple, straightforward building, and from the use of good and harmonious materials. They desire as far as possible to discourage useless ornamentation, and to secure that buildings shall be suitably designed for their purpose and position."<sup>34</sup>

It will be seen how, in later years, this idea was to form the basis of the approach towards council house design; however, for reasons which will be discussed later, a far greater emphasis was to be placed on the simplification of such housing design.

#### The Cheap Cottages Exhibition and Further Housing Literature.

The development of Letchworth Garden City attracted a great deal of interest, at home and abroad, thus popularising the idea of Garden Cities. Despite the good intentions of those concerned with the town, however, a problem arose in connection with the housing. One of the main objectives of the Garden City being to provide good, healthy, cheap housing for working people, First Garden City Ltd. built a number of cottages for its own workers to the north of the Letchworth site. These, however, cost over £200 each, the resulting rental proving to be too expensive. For this reason, and also, perhaps because industry was not being attracted to Letchworth quickly enough, an exhibition of cheap cottages was organised in 1905.<sup>35</sup> The exhibition was devised by the Country Gentleman magazine following a suggestion by the editor of the Spectator. The intention of the exhibition was to create a worker's cottage for £150 by economising in planning, materials, fittings, cartage and employment of labour. The exhibition both reflected the growing interest in cheap housing and stimulated further interest in the subject.

In the Architectural Review of 1905,<sup>36</sup> H. Kempton Dyson reviewed the exhibition and discussed the subject of cheap housing and its problems in

general. The conditions for the cottages entered in the exhibition were that they should be detached, and, as far as possible, should provide the following accommodation:

"Either one large living-room and scullery or one small room and a kitchen scullery, three bedrooms, with two fireplaces, containing a total cubic space of not less than 2000 feet; height of rooms not to be less than 7'6".<sup>37</sup>

The limit of £150 for the cost of a cottage was calculated on the average wage of an agricultural labourer, and the maximum rent he would be able to afford. Most of the competitors, however, exceeded this limit. Kempton Dyson attributed the contemporary interest in cheap cottages not so much to the needs of the agricultural labourers and artisans as to people wanting a fairly cheap weekend cottage. If this was the case, it was certainly in direct contrast to the aims of the exhibition. Very many such people had indeed been attracted to the exhibition, and some of the competitors seemed to have decorated the cottages accordingly, rather than in a manner which could be afforded by the average agricultural labourer.

Purdom, in his book The Garden City, of 1913, criticised the exhibition in strong terms, stating:

"There can be no question now that the exhibition, while it gave the place a tremendous advertisement, did no little harm. It set a rage for cheapness from which Garden City has hardly yet recovered; it gave the town the character of a village of tiny weekend cottages not very well built; its curiosities of planning, construction, and material, which had nothing in common with the objects of the town, gave the place a name for cranky buildings; ...The style of the cottages, the site chosen for them, and their arrangement on the site, remain to-day as evidences of the most disadvantageous incident in the early history of the town. ...It will be a happy day for Letchworth when the exhibition is forgotten and all its consequences are destroyed."<sup>38</sup>

However, if the cheap cottages exhibition may not have achieved its aim, it certainly encouraged further interest in cheap cottage building, for whatever purpose, with an emphasis on achieving economy, while hopefully maintaining good design. An interest in the potential use of new

building materials certainly arose from the exhibition. On the other hand, the fact that the exhibition was necessary in the first place, due to the high cost of the existing Letchworth cottages, demonstrates the major problem facing Garden City housing in general. Providing cottages of a much improved standard compared with most 19th century working class housing, yet at a price affordable by the tenants, while at the same time returning a sufficient rental as to be practicable, proved to be an extremely difficult task. This was emphasised by the fact that most of the competitors exceeded the £150 price limit.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, literature concerned with solving the housing problem had been growing in popularity. The success of the Garden City Association, also other organisations such as the National Housing Reform Council,<sup>39</sup> and the achievements of Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb (for which Parker and Unwin were again later commissioned) inspired a great many further writings on the subject. We will now briefly look at some of these works.

S.W.Cranfield and H.I.Potter's book Housing for the Working classes in Urban Districts was published in 1904. In the introduction, it was stated that the designs for small houses included in the book had been prepared to assist individuals or public organisations to select the most suitable plans for their particular localities.<sup>40</sup> It was also intended to introduce original ideas and improvements to the standards of working class housing.

The authors listed three major problems which aggravated the difficulty of housing the poor at rents they could afford. These were the increase in the cost of building, the adoption of more stringent building regulations by local authorities, and the increase in local taxation.<sup>41</sup> The building regulations set down by local byelaws in urban and many rural districts were based upon the model byelaws issued by the Local Government Board.

Certain byelaws were enforced in some districts and not in others, a lack of uniformity that particularly affected working class housing and caused much inconvenience to architects and builders.

Cranfield and Potter then dealt with methods of building small cottages. In keeping with Garden City planning theories, they recommended lending variety to groups of cottages by building in an irregular line and by using suitable building materials<sup>42</sup> as an alternative to the typical monotonous rows of suburban cottages. With regard to building materials, stone or brickwork finished with stuck joint, or brickwork or concrete finished with roughcast were recommended for walls. Roughcast was recommended for utilitarian as well as for aesthetic reasons. Since external walls were frequently only one brick thick, rough casting would make the walls more weatherproof, also cooler in summer and warmer in winter. Concrete, although rarely substituted for brickwork, was recommended as its use could cause a considerable saving in building costs.

A table followed giving minimum and desirable dimensions for rooms in cottages, to serve as a guide for the plans later in the book, the measurements to be taken as a minimum. For example, the minimum and desirable dimensions for a living room or parlour were 11'x 8'6" and 12'x 9'. For a double bedroom these were 10'x 8'6" and 12'x 9'; and for a single bedroom 6'6"x 8'6" and 8'x 9'. 43

Similarly to Unwin's recommendations of two years previously, Cranfield and Potter agreed that the living room should be the largest room in the cottage and should face south for maximum sunlight, this possibly increased by the use of bay windows. Other recommendations were the discouragement of the use of gaslights, and in order to save space, the provision of baths below the floor.

A later book, by Maurice Adams, entitled Modern Cottage Architecture, and published in 1912, dealt with similar points. Adams began by discussing the problems of cheap cottage building. He stated that there was much advertising of the new garden suburbs "with the skylark singing overhead and the rabbits frisking below"<sup>44</sup> but that this ideal image did not always correspond to the reality.

Adams emphasised the importance of cottages being compact, convenient, durable and cheap, and also paid a good deal of attention, more so than Cranfield and Potter, to the outward appearance of cottages, arguing that there was no reason why they should not be picturesque.<sup>45</sup> According to Adams, many people believed that only ugly and tasteless buildings would be cheaper, while picturesque, convenient and well-proportioned buildings would be more expensive to build and to maintain. In accordance with Arts and Crafts ideas, he stated that a building should harmonise with its site and surroundings, and be unobtrusive and comfortable without excessive ornament. The picturesque appearance of a cottage would come from its simplicity of form, good proportion, and also graceful skylines to cast shadows "so essential for contrast and colour".<sup>46</sup> Still in keeping with Arts and Crafts beliefs, he stressed the importance of the influence of local colour and texture in materials for giving charm to buildings. The vernacular style was the keynote for modern cottages, with an absence of affectation. The use of local materials also reduced cartage costs, and was important for an effect of harmony. Adams wrote: "for cottage design, the less variety of materials used the better".<sup>47</sup>

Adams then made various recommendations concerning details of cottage building. He believed that permanent fixtures and fittings were not necessary in cottages as tenants would often bring their own furniture, and would possibly break permanent fixtures. All fittings were recommended to be as plain and solid as possible to prevent vandalism by the tenants. He

gave the example of wood skirtings running the risk of being used by tenants as firewood. Regarding the provision of a bath, this was to be placed in front of the fire in the scullery, placed in such a way that it could not be used for any other purpose, and should be sunk below the floor in a recess or under a table-top cover. The top was to be a detachable flap on a level with the floor.

#### Unwin's Planning Theories.

It is now necessary to look at further writings by Unwin, some of which were to have an enormous impact on the development of housing and town-planning theory, and which were to influence the design both of garden city and garden suburb developments, and later the design of council house building.

Unwin's pamphlet, Nothing Gained by Overcrowding; or how the Garden City type of Development may Benefit both Owner and Occupier, prepared for the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association and published in 1912, dealt with the concept of low-density housing. The limit of twelve houses to the acre, as expressed in the paper became the best-known and possibly the most important of Unwin's ideas. This standard limit later became a major aspect of council housing layout when Unwin became the chief architect in the Ministry of Health after the First World War.

Despite the reference in the title of the paper to 'the Garden City type of development', low-density housing, particularly at a maximum of twelve houses to the acre, was not specifically identifiable with the Garden City as originally outlined by Howard; <sup>48</sup> nonetheless, this idea

became closely associated with the Garden City Movement, and indeed had a great impact.

According to Walter Creese, Barry Parker explained that there was:

"nothing magical or sacrosanct in the number twelve. It is simply that we found, by a long process of trial and error, there is inevitably sufficient loss of frontage where there are more than twelve houses to the acre to cause the cost of roads to outweigh the savings in cost of land."<sup>49</sup>

Unwin began his pamphlet by criticising the way in which many towns were exceeding a desirable size, and obliterating the countryside.<sup>50</sup> Similarly to Howard, he advocated ensuring belts of open countryside around existing towns, with detached suburbs grouped around a centre and separated from the town by enough ground for recreation and contact with nature.<sup>51</sup> Unwin's main point, however, was the relation and proportion between the buildings and their surrounding ground.<sup>52</sup> Unwin explained that overcrowding of buildings on land had been so widely practiced that it was generally considered to be economically necessary.<sup>53</sup> He stated that at first sight it seemed to most people that the more houses were built on a particular piece of land, the more economical the use of the land would be, and the less rent would be payable by each tenant.<sup>54</sup> Unwin then demonstrated by way of illustrations that the reverse of this theory can actually be the case. He contrasted two plots of land of ten acres each, one having 34 houses per acre, approximately the maximum number permitted; the other having 15.2 houses per acre. The former contained houses built in rows of streets, the latter arranged the houses in two groups, each surrounding an inner green space with tennis courts, bowling greens and playgrounds. In each case, the houses were the same size, however, in the latter scheme, instead of being in continuous rows, the houses were arranged in groups of two, four or six with a space between each group, and also passageways through the groups ensuring direct access to the gardens from the front roads, without the need for back roads. The value of both pieces of land was presumed to be



the same, as was the cost of roads.<sup>55</sup> The first scheme involved far more roads than the second, resulting in over double the cost of roads in the second scheme.<sup>56</sup> After calculation, the second scheme appeared to be far less costly to the tenant, while acquiring more ground per house.<sup>57</sup> The principle behind Unwin's demonstration was not, however, quite so much of lessening the cost as of obtaining more ground for the money per house.<sup>58</sup> Unwin also advocated the building of small cottages which would prove to be more economical to the tenant, and suggested that the reduction of houses built per acre should not be a set limit but should be in accordance with the size of the houses.<sup>59</sup> Three years before the publication of Nothing Gained by Overcrowding, Unwin had recommended a density of twelve houses to the acre in his book Town Planning in Practice, the first comprehensive set of guide-lines for town-planners,<sup>60</sup> and indeed, low density housing became a characteristic feature of all garden city or garden suburb developments.

In Town Planning in Practice, Unwin discussed the desirable layout of modern towns. He stated that modern conditions required that new districts be built to a definite and ordered plan.<sup>61</sup> Haphazard systems of development, such as had frequently taken place in the suburbs, were not suited to the rapid growth of modern towns. An orderly design was of great importance to Unwin; he recommended that the designer should feel free to adopt departures from a regular plan so as to take advantage of the features of the site, but only provided this was done in a straightforward and orderly manner. Unwin continued:

"It is the mere aimless arrangement, such as one finds springing from an ill-considered reaction against formal design, that offends against one's sense of order."<sup>62</sup>

Regarding the preferable shape of plots to adopt, Unwin compared the merits of building houses detached or semi-detached, with those of building houses in blocks.<sup>63</sup> He attributed the public's strong preference for

detached or semi-detached houses partially to the very poor party walls generally built between houses, with the consequent problems of noise from one house being heard in the next. Although recognising the conveniences in planning, lighting and ventilation in detached houses, in that windows could be included on all four sides, or on three sides in the case of semi-detached houses, Unwin favoured the adoption of blocks of three to six houses. He explained that in such groups, provided the central houses were given ample frontage, all the houses could be planned to allow for thorough lighting and ventilation. A further advantage was that a greater length of garden could be arranged, also a greater distance between the backs of the houses. To demonstrate this point, Unwin compared two diagrams, the first having detached houses in the centre of the plots, eight houses to the acre; the second having the houses built in groups, at the same density.<sup>64</sup> In the first layout, the garden was cut into pieces at the front and sides, whereas in the second layout, a long narrow garden was achieved, which Unwin believed would be more suitable for good vistas, while the grouping of the buildings was essential for good 'street pictures'. He pointed out that in residential districts, a major difficulty was the constant multiplication of buildings too small in scale to produce individually an effect in the road, the grouping of such buildings would therefore create larger units which could then be more effectively arranged. This technique was frequently used by Parker and Unwin at Letchworth, and was followed in other garden city and suburb developments.

Even where it was not possible to avoid much repetition of detached or semi-detached houses, these should, Unwin continued, be so arranged as to give some sense of grouping. Certain recommendations were the setting back of three or four pairs of houses with a continuous green in front of them, the end houses being set forward again to the building line, also the widening of the street with a double avenue of trees planted. By various means the planner could produce interest and variety while maintaining the

necessary sense of unity. Variety could be obtained by the spacing of the buildings, although such uneven spacing should not be carried out in an irregular manner, a certain pattern had to be adopted in such spacing.

Unwin stated that the groups of houses around Old English village greens or in cathedral closes, could provide valuable suggestions, in contrast to the modern tendency to emphasise detachment. He continued:

"So long as we are confined to endless multiplication of carefully fenced in villas, and rows of cottages toeing the same building line, each with its little garden securely railed, reminding one of a cattle pen, the result is bound to be monotonous and devoid of beauty. It must be our effort to counteract this tendency and to prove that greater enjoyment to each house-holder can be secured by grouping the buildings so that they may share the outlook over a wider strip of green or garden."<sup>65</sup>

An important influence on Unwin's planning philosophy was that of the layout of medieval towns. Throughout Town Planning in Practice there are numerous illustrations of such towns, particularly from Germany. Unwin expressed his admiration for medieval towns with their irregular yet attractive planning, contending that the artistic tradition in the Middle Ages was so steadily maintained and so widely prevalent that it became almost an instinct, which led to their planners making the best of all such irregularities in the layout of towns.<sup>66</sup> Although certainly admiring such planning, Unwin made it clear that simply to copy such towns would be inappropriate in modern conditions:

"The informal beauty which resulted from the natural and apparently unconscious growth of the medieval town may command our highest admiration, but we may feel that it arose from conditions of life which no longer exist, and that it is unwise to seek to reproduce it. Possibly other forms of beauty will be found more adapted to our present conditions."<sup>67</sup>

Nonetheless, in Garden City planning and housing design, a medieval influence was frequently recognised, particularly in the dormers and gables characteristic of many of the houses, an aspect which had stemmed also from the vernacular revival houses of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Towards the beginning of the First World War, a gradual change in attitude towards housing began to occur. To conclude this chapter, we will look at certain criticisms of the Garden City Movement. The somewhat idealistic theory of Garden Cities, although indeed having gained immense popularity and certainly having had a great influence on housing and planning; was slowly taken over by a more rationalist school of thought, opposed to the more romantic element of Garden City architecture.

A. Trystan Edwards, writing in the Town Planning Review in 1913,<sup>68</sup> although certainly misinterpreting many aspects of the Garden City Movement, expressed some interesting criticisms. Edwards strongly opposed the external form of Garden City houses, also their layout. He felt that the sanitary aspects of building had been sacrificed to achieving an attractive exterior. This of course was the exact opposite to the intentions of Garden City architects. Edwards wrote:

"In adopting a picturesque style, some of the worst and most insanitary features of medieval building have been incorporated; for instance, the upstairs storey is often put in the roof, and has low, sloping ceilings with dormer windows that admit very little light into the rooms. The external effect may have charms for the landscape painter, but such houses can hardly be considered a good example of twentieth-century building. Of what value is it to have an abundance of fresh air outside if our romanticists forbid us to breathe it! If it is contended that one cannot afford rooms of a more rational shape, the obvious answer is that it is possible to do without most of the dormers and the little gables and the sham half-timberings and the hundred and one other medieval knickknacks with which these houses are provided. The health of the inmates should come first."<sup>69</sup>

Edwards suggested that the architects should return to the traditional method of building houses in long terraced rows, and criticised the tendency to low-density housing away from the towns, a method which he found 'profoundly unnatural'.<sup>70</sup> When discussing suburbs, Edwards wrote that "perhaps the most shoddy and depressing is the typical Garden Suburb",<sup>71</sup> finding that rather than combining the advantages of both town and country dwelling, such suburbs offered neither. The Garden City as originally described by Howard, had been strictly confined by the agricultural belt to

prevent spreading. However, Edwards feared that too many Garden Cities and Suburbs would lead to excessive development taking over the countryside.

A further criticism was that Garden Suburbs showed too little design in their layout. Edwards stated that even when a formal plan was adopted, certain irregularities would be arbitrarily brought in, as if the architects' "aesthetic canons were derived from a too liberal interpretation of the text 'Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth'."<sup>72</sup>

In January 1914, in response to an article defending the Garden City,<sup>73</sup> Edwards again launched his attack on such housing and planning ideas.<sup>74</sup> He acknowledged that the public was now fully aware of the evils caused by the housing shortage, an awareness to which the Garden City advocates had certainly contributed. He concluded, however, that the Garden City Movement had served its purpose, and recommended instead a more compact layout of towns, as opposed to what he called: "the monotonous diffuseness of Garden Cities".<sup>75</sup> It will be seen in later chapters, how a more simplified architectural style was eventually seen to be more appropriate, for theoretical and, especially, for economic reasons.

#### Footnotes.

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3. E.Howard , Garden Cities of Tomorrow, London, edited 1946,p.42.
4. Ibid p.46.
5. L.Mumford , 'The Garden City Idea and Modern Planning', in Howard, op.cit. p.34.
6. Howard op.cit. p. 51.
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8. Ibid p. 58.
9. Howard op.cit. p.51.
10. Purdom op.cit. pp.9-12 and p.22.
11. B.W.Richardson , Hygeia: or, a City of Health, 1876. Quoted in Howard op.cit. p.58.
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15. Ibid p.36
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19. M.K.Miller, To Speak of Planning is to Speak of Unwin: The contribution of Sir Raymond Unwin (1863-1940) to the evolution of British town planning. Ph.D. Thesis 1981, University of Birmingham, p.106.
20. R.Unwin, Cottage Plans and Common Sense, Fabian Tract no.109, 2nd reprint, London, February 1908, p.2.
21. Ibid p.3.
22. Idem.
23. Ibid p.4.
24. Idem.
25. Ibid p.6.

26. *Ibid* p.11.
27. *Ibid* p.13.
28. *Ibid* p.15.
29. C.B.Purdom, The Garden City, pp.268-9.
30. *Ibid* pp.261-2.
31. *Ibid* p.262.
32. *Ibid* p.264.
33. *Ibid* p.65.
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35. S.Bayley, The Garden City, Unit 23 of "History of Architecture and Design 1890-1939", O.U.P., Milton Keynes 1975, pp.31-2.
36. H. Kempton Dyson, 'Cheap Cottages and the Exhibition at Letchworth', parts 1 and 2, Architectural Review, 1905.
37. *Ibid* p.108.
38. C.B.Purdom, The Garden City, pp.50-51.
39. The National Housing Reform Council was formed at the turn of the century by Henry R. Aldridge. Its aims were:
- "To educate and stimulate public opinion and local authorities so that the fullest possible use may be made of existing housing and sanitary legislation. To urge that Parliament shall remove from municipalities and societies of public utility those shackles which cripple or make difficult the execution of housing schemes and to promote experiments and organisations tending to secure better and cheaper methods of town-planning, local development and house building."
- See Cherry, *op.cit* p.40-42.
40. S.W.Cranfield and H.I.Potter, Houses for the Working Classes in Urban Districts, London, 1904, p.1.
41. *Idem*.
42. *Ibid* p.4.
43. *Idem*.
44. M.B.Adams, Modern Cottage Architecture, London, 1912, p.2.
45. *Ibid* p.8.
46. *Ibid* p.14.
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51. Ibid p.2.
52. Ibid p.3.
53. Idem.
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55. Ibid p.4-5.
56. Ibid p.5. The cost of roads in scheme 1 amounted to £9747, 10s, whereas in scheme 2 the cost was £4480, 10s.
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62. Ibid p.348.
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## Chapter 2.

### Early Negotiations for a Garden City at Rosyth.

In 1903, the Admiralty proposed to build a dockyard at Rosyth, about 3½ miles from Dunfermline on the Firth of Forth. As Rosyth was simply a rural farming area with a small population, the development of the dockyard would necessitate the provision of suitable accommodation and amenities for the many Admiralty employees and their families. Consequently, hopes were soon raised that a town would be built in the area, on the Garden City principle. Patrick Geddes, in his survey of Dunfermline, published in 1904,<sup>1</sup> referred to the proposed town at Rosyth, warning that for the opportunity to be missed, and for the town to develop in the ordinary way, would be:

"A disaster to the world and a disgrace to all concerned, not to speak of the deep and dangerous strategic blunder and waste this implies and educates for."<sup>2</sup>

The question of Rosyth was taken up with great interest by the Garden City Association, which, as will be shown, played an important role in the negotiations for the eventual dockyard town. In August 1908, the Association's monthly journal, Garden Cities and Town Planning, contained an article concerning the proposed dockyard.<sup>3</sup> The article stated that despite suggestions to the contrary, there was no intention of the scheme being abandoned.<sup>4</sup> The matter of the dockyard had for many months engaged the attention of the Association, whose negotiations on the subject had, however, been conducted without undue publicity. It was hoped that the Association's efforts would now have success, the article stating that:

"The co-operation of one of the most influential bodies in Scotland has been secured, and at a special meeting of the Executive Committee, on July 29th, it was decided that the Secretary be sent to Scotland for

the purpose of organising a conference on the subject of the future of Rosyth."<sup>5</sup>

The following month, the above journal published the full text of a memorial sent by the Association to the Carnegie Dunfermline Trustees.<sup>6</sup> The memorial pointed out the dangers involved should haphazard development of the new town take place, overcrowding and other insanitary conditions being inevitable. On the other hand, a rare opportunity was presented for bringing into being a town with conditions of life superior to those of most towns of a similar size. The Admiralty having furnished the Association with information on the subject, the memorial referred to an Ordnance Survey map of the Admiralty's lands, stating that the greater part of the land would be reserved for any further extension of the dockyard. A small part, to the north of the land, would possibly be feued for building purposes, although not for some years. As the Admiralty did not intend to build any houses except official residences, the greater part of the incoming population would have to be housed outside the lands taken by the Admiralty.

Regarding the growth of the new town, the memorial stressed that the point of supreme importance was that in no parts of it should there be more than a certain number of houses to the acre. The securing of spaces for recreation within easy reach of the town, and the preservation as far as possible of the natural beauty of the neighbourhood, also demanded attention.

It was pointed out that, in 1903, when the commencement of the Rosyth works was contemplated, a Mr. Pretzman, on behalf of the Board of Admiralty, gave an assurance in the House of Commons that whenever any part of the Admiralty land was disposed of for building purposes, special conditions would be imposed to ensure the health and general welfare of the people to be housed. The following year, his successor, a Mr. Lee, assured that when the time for building came, the Admiralty would confer with

gentlemen interested in the 'Garden City' movement. There was, however, no prospect, at any rate for some years to come, of any building taking place whereby the intention of the Admiralty could be carried out.

The Association appealed to the Carnegie Dunfermline Trustees to give their utmost consideration to the matter, and suggested that the Trustees themselves might acquire some land for building purposes. The Association also suggested that the Trustees should attempt to induce the municipal authorities of the burgh of Dunfermline to extend their boundaries southwards.

The appeal was not altogether successful, as The Times reported on September 4th.<sup>7</sup> The Trustees' response had been only "sympathetic", partly because their yearly income of between £25,000 and £26,000 was already fully employed. The report also stated that locally, high expectations for Rosyth had passed, the local feeling as regards co-operation with the Government being neither particularly warm nor confident.

In later issues of Garden Cities and Town Planning, the Association expressed increasing concern over the lack of progress at Rosyth. The December 1908 issue contained an article by Ewart G. Culpin, the Association's secretary, who reported that he, with the chairman of the Executive Committee, had recently visited Rosyth.<sup>8</sup> Culpin stated that the neighbourhood would become populous in a comparatively few years time, the bulk of the population being housed outside the Admiralty land. Although recognising that at the price paid for the land, the Government could not be expected to purchase more than they felt obliged to, Culpin argued that through the omission to purchase more land, a very great opportunity had been lost which would probably never again occur. Had there been sufficient land for the development of the town as well as of the dockyard, the Government might have set an example to the world by properly planning the area. What, instead, had happened was that a value of thousands of pounds

had been added to private property, with every indication that in some quarters a very high charge would be made for land which, a few years previously, had had a freehold value for agricultural purposes of not much more than the annual feu duty. There had, therefore, been much speculation. New one-roomed tenements had been built near Inverkeithing, of which Culpin wrote:

"although doubtless superior to the bulk of their class, [they] provide such an object-lesson that it is to be hoped the development of the town will not take place in this direction, but that the community will be housed in separate houses, with a reasonable amount of land, obtained at such a price that rents may be reasonable, and life made not only enduring, but healthier and brighter"<sup>9</sup>

The Garden City Association's tenth annual report, presented to the annual meeting on January 27th 1909, '° referred to the development of Rosyth as "a matter of outstanding importance." The report appeared to be fairly optimistic, stating that local interest was thoroughly aroused and that the owners of land adjacent to the dockyard were sympathetic with the Association's aims and fully alive to the desirability of proper development of the area. With the passing of the Town Planning Bill,'<sup>1</sup> it would be possible for a proper town plan to be prepared either by the burgh of Dunfermline or by the District Committee of the West Fife County Council.

On March 20th 1909, Lord Shaw of Dunfermline referred to Rosyth at the annual dinner of the London Fife Association.<sup>12</sup> With regard to the work which the Garden City Association had done to establish Garden City conditions at Rosyth, he stated that there were opportunities there which were too apt to be overlooked, and that:

"We are desirous in Scotland, if possible, to make Rosyth a model town for the world."

He affirmed that the Government was favourable to the creation of a Garden City community, and that the town of Dunfermline was deeply interested in the matter through its leading citizens [the Carnegie Trustees]. If Dunfermline was to extend its burgh boundary to include Rosyth and some of

the communities around it, he continued, a large community would be gathered together under the auspices of a willing Government regarding the development of the area; also the burgh would be endowed with wealth beyond all former municipal experience, part of the revenue being devoted to the benefit of the industrial population. Lord Shaw concluded that the House of Lords would be the first to help Fife should legislation on the above lines be necessary. Two years later, the burgh boundaries were extended, to include Rosyth, under the Dunfermline Burgh Extension and Drainage Bill, which received Royal Assent on August 18th, 1911.

A certain amount of progress was made during 1910, which raised expectations for a suitable town being built in the near future. On February 16th, The Times reported that Sir George Macrae, the vice-president of the Scottish Local Government Board, with Dr. Leslie Mackenzie and Mr. Grant, the head of the Public Health Department, had visited Rosyth to consider the laying out of the ground under a town planning scheme on garden city lines.<sup>13</sup> Colonel S.H. Exham R.E., the Admiralty Superintending Engineer at Rosyth, showed the officials over the land and pointed out the Admiralty's proposals for providing for the needs of their employees. The officials were shown principally the part of the ground which the Admiralty intended to sell or feu, and which, along with land belonging to Lord Elgin, would be the site for the housing. The area proposed for town planning was the land to the south of the new road at Rosyth, and the L.G.B.S. representatives hoped that the land would be laid out in conformity with the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909. They suggested that the Admiralty and other interested parties should combine to carry out a drainage scheme for the area.

The following month, The Times reported that the Admiralty had offered to pay a considerable part of the capital expenditure for a drainage scheme for the Rosyth area.<sup>14</sup> The article also mentioned that from statements made

on behalf of the Crown authorities, it was evident that the Government hoped that the district would be the first to come within the scope of the 1909 Act.

Further developments were reported in the February 1910 issue of Garden Cities and Town Planning.<sup>15</sup> Largely as the result of the interest raised by the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, a scheme was being prepared for the establishment of a Garden Suburb for Rosyth. During the autumn of 1908, while the chairman of the Executive Committee and the secretary of the Association were in Rosyth making enquiries as to the project, steps were taken towards the formation of a strong East of Scotland branch of the Association. The branch continued negotiations, with the result that a local company was formed in Dunfermline to start work on a small scale. It was proposed to feu a small portion of the burgh land, which had been offered at £8 per acre, the applicants making the roads and drains. The layout plan was to allow for harmonious development of the neighbouring land, and the scheme was to be on the lines of the Association. The capital required had already been promised, and since houses were in great demand, a rapid development was expected.

On May 24th of the same year, an article appeared in The Scotsman, which optimistically suggested that both the L.G.B.S. and the Admiralty were in favour of participating fully in the development of a successful scheme.<sup>16</sup> The article briefly discussed the attraction of garden city housing in contrast to the slum conditions of many contemporary cities, then turned to a meeting held the previous day at the Edinburgh Branch of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association. The Association demanded that the new town should from the outset be built on model lines and to a pre-arranged plan. Professor R. Lodge stated that the Admiralty was favourable to the development of Rosyth on garden city lines, and added that the L.G.B. were heartily in sympathy with the movement. It was

emphasised that despite the costliness of the project, the advantages of health, fresh air and sanitation were important, and would be:

"little regarded if the jerry-builder, with his stacks of brick tenements, is permitted to despoil and disfigure the site of the future naval base."

Progress still appeared to be satisfactory by July 1910, when Garden Cities and Town Planning reported that the local Association was energetically pursuing its enquiries, and that it was hoped that before long they could announce a definite scheme.<sup>17</sup> The article described Rosyth as "the greatest opportunity for effective town-planning in the U.K.", and quoted the following paragraph from the Annual Report of the East of Scotland Branch:

"The Executive have carefully watched the developments which are taking place at Rosyth. They have kept in touch with the authorities concerned, and with their knowledge and acquiescence they are at present maturing certain proposals. The details of these proposals it is, of course, impossible to discuss now, but as both the Admiralty and the L.G.B. seem fully to realise the necessity of a satisfactory town planning scheme for the Rosyth area, the public may rest assured that whether the suggestions of the Executive are adopted or not, due care will be taken in the planning of the district."<sup>18</sup>

The article concluded that all efforts should be put towards the scheme, as it would be "nothing less than a national calamity" if the opportunity was lost.

The above issue later gave an account of the First Annual Meeting of the Edinburgh and East of Scotland Branch of the Association, held on May 23rd.<sup>19</sup> At the meeting, Professor Lodge stated that it would be a positive scandal if Rosyth was not built on model lines. If the opportunity was not taken, he continued, the Garden City Movement would be condemned, and the Act [The Town Planning Act of 1909] would prove a fiasco. If the Branch of the Association could not take a share in the development of Rosyth, it was its duty to watch over the development, keep public interest roused on the subject, and to render any service open to them.

In February 1911, the above journal summarised the progress being made with the scheme, again in optimistic terms.<sup>20</sup> Although the Carnegie Dunfermline Trustees had eventually found themselves unable by means of their constitution to take up the matter of housing, this matter had been placed in the hands of the local Executive of the East of Scotland Garden Cities and Town Planning Association. The central Executive of the Association continued to render what help it could, also a special sub-committee had been formed, which was in touch with the Edinburgh Association. The article continued:

"A most satisfactory feature of the negotiations is the manner in which the Government is fulfilling the promise made several years ago in the House of Commons that the Association should be consulted on the question of development. Great willingness has been shown to assist those responsible for the drawing up of the scheme ...the Admiralty have granted special privileges to representatives of the Edinburgh Association to visit Chatham dockyard ...By this means the Association is able to gauge the needs and requirements of a dockyard population in the matter of housing accommodation. ...this knowledge will be of great advantage when the Rosyth estate comes to be laid out."<sup>21</sup>

#### The Housing of the Workforce.

Although the question of a garden city for Rosyth had certainly been under much discussion, and certain progress had been made in persuading the relevant authorities as to the desirability of such a scheme, nothing had actually been done to provide the necessary accommodation for the growing influx of Admiralty employees. The construction of the dockyard had begun in May 1909,<sup>22</sup> and by 1911 the work was well under way. During the following years many thousands of employees and their families would come from England and Ireland as well as from Scotland, needing accommodation in the area. Existing accommodation was not sufficient to house all the employees, and was frequently of a poor standard. The conditions of such



accommodation were described in detail in the report sent to the L.G.B.S., Edinburgh, on July 11th, 1911. The Report upon the house accommodation available for workers employed at Rosyth and for their families, and upon provision for sickness and accident, was compiled by Thomas F. Dewar, the medical inspector to the L.G.B.S., and John Wilson, the Board's architectural inspector.<sup>23</sup>

According to the report, approximately 1800 men were engaged on the dockyard works in May 1911, a number which would greatly increase as the work progressed. The majority of these workers came from outside Scotland, as was shown by the percentages given for December 1910: Scots, 691 or 41%; English, 530 or 31%; Irish 465 or 28%. By mid June 1911, the total number of workmen had increased to around 2000. The places of residence of these men were listed as follows:

Inverkeithing	common lodging house	100
„	elsewhere	400
Jamestown	common lodging houses	640
„	elsewhere	50
North Queensferry		50
Burnside		40
Hillend		10
Dunfermline	common lodging houses	10
„	elsewhere	400
Pattiesmuir		20
Charlestown and Crossford		25
Limekilns		<u>255</u>
		<u>2000</u>

The first type of accommodation to be discussed was the common lodging houses. In February 1911, such a house had been opened in Inverkeithing, to accommodate 152 men, the largest number having occupied it at any one time, however, being 138. The lodging house was situated near the station, although unfortunately close to an old slaughterhouse, the distance between the two buildings being 20 to 26 feet from door to door. Inside the lodging house, the dormitories were divided into cubicles by means of asbestos sheeting, this being fireproof and vermin proof. The lower dormitory was dark and cramped, although the upper one was better lit and airier, with cross-ventilation. The sanitary arrangements and the dining hall had not been clean at the first visit, though these had improved at the second visit. The remaining facilities were two free baths and a well-lit and ventilated reading room.

At Jamestown, a hamlet adjacent to Inverkeithing, there were three common lodging houses, generally of a very poor standard. The largest of these was owned by Rosyth Naval Base Mansions Ltd., and was registered to accommodate 618 men. The number of lodgers, however, had never exceeded 540, the usual maximum being 500. The beds were in cubicles in two tiers, the lower of which being dark and insufficiently ventilated, as were some dormitories. The general cleanliness was not found to be satisfactory. McGrath's Rosyth Boarding House, registered to accommodate 141 lodgers, had only been full on one or two occasions. On the first visit there had been 74 occupants, and 52 on the second visit. The conditions of the house were not at all favourable, the kitchen and dining hall were not clean, also the external sanitary arrangements had been extremely defective, although these had recently been improved. These two lodging houses faced each other over a badly constructed side road. The remaining house was considered preferable to the previous two, despite the premises being made of wood and corrugated iron, with no baths provided. The dormitories, however, were well-lit and ventilated, and there was a high standard of cleanliness. The

poorly constructed houses, grouped in a quadrilateral arrangement called Jamestown Square. These houses were around 100 years old, small and low-roofed, without straps and lathing on the outside walls, and in several cases came below the level of the ground in front. Some minor repairs had taken place to avoid condemnation, however there were no w.c.s or wash-houses, four privies having been put up by the proprietor during the 1890's to satisfy the authorities. These privies were situated too near the houses and were in a filthy condition, as the report described:

"At later visits on the 8th and 14th June they were very filthy, the adjacent ashpit was full and extremely offensive, and flies were very numerous not only in and around the ashpit but also in the nearest houses, whose windows, in view of the unusually warm weather, were wide open."<sup>25</sup>

There was no definite evidence of overcrowding, however this was most likely. Despite these conditions, the rents were high and had increased considerably since the start of the Rosyth works, due to the increased demand for housing in the district.

In North Queensferry, most of the workmen were lodgers. Again there was no definite evidence of overcrowding, although some houses took in as many as four or five lodgers. The area had no empty houses, and although some houses were far from ideal, the inspectors did not believe them to be unhealthy.

In Burnside, a village to the north of Inverkeithing, several reports of overcrowding had been confirmed. The village consisted of around 30 houses, some recently converted from barns or stores. Most of the houses accommodated two or three lodgers, with generally two people per room, the maximum overcrowding occurring here and in Jamestown. The houses themselves were generally well-constructed, however there were only six privies, furthermore, the ashpits were found to be offensive.

The remaining areas were then briefly described. The workmen in Dunfermline were generally tenants or lodgers in houses, as there had been

no complaints about the dwelling houses, these had not been visited. In Pattiesmuir, a small hamlet near Rosyth, the workmen lived in good, well-kept houses. Unfortunately, however, the same bed was sometimes used by day and night by the workmen. No unsatisfactory conditions had been found in Charlestown and Crossford. Many workmen, generally of a better class, were reported to live at Limekilns, a village on the estuary of the Forth, 1½ miles west of Rosyth. On inspection, the report of overcrowding in the village was not verified.

The report then mentioned certain byelaws which had been passed in the Dunfermline district, although not yet in the Burgh of Inverkeithing, for the regulation of houses let in lodgings. When four or more lodgers were found residing in one house, the house would be registered as a 'house let in lodgings'. This information, however, was frequently difficult to obtain. To such houses, byelaw number 9 applied, which stated that no occupier should allow beds which had been occupied during the night to be again occupied during the day. A penalty not exceeding £5 pounds could be imposed for the breach of this byelaw.

The problem of overcrowding was then discussed. The inspectors distinguished between 'domestic' overcrowding whereby "convenience, decorum, or propriety" were threatened, and the even worse degree of overcrowding which seemed likely at Jamestown Square and Burnside. It had not been found that any overcrowding was occurring or had habitually occurred within the area to such an extent as to justify prosecution under Section 16 of the Public Health (Scotland) Act of 1897.<sup>26</sup> The lesser degree of overcrowding, however, caused a great problem, with abundant evidence of its occurrence. The inspectors cited the Registrar-General's definition of overcrowding as an average of more than two persons per room. Using this definition, such overcrowding prevailed to a large extent in houses occupied by Rosyth workmen.

The inspectors did not consider it their duty to examine the causes of this overcrowding, except for the fact that apart from the common lodging houses in which the better class of workmen were disinclined to reside, there was a great difficulty for single men in finding comfortable and decent places to live. A further cause was that the tenants of the houses, generally with families, frequently took in excessive numbers of lodgers, most likely because the rents they were compelled to pay tended to be very high in relation to their income. The high rents were in proportion to the great demand for housing caused by the construction work at Rosyth.

The problems of accommodating the families of the workmen were then discussed. At the time of the report, approximately one third of the workmen at Rosyth were married, and there was no doubt that many of these men had encountered considerable difficulty in finding houses of an appropriate size and rent, also adapted to their needs. Some families had taken houses beyond their means, and therefore had to rely on the profit made from taking in lodgers in order to pay their rent. It was pointed out that plenty of accommodation was available for the lowest class of worker, in the lodging houses, at least one of which was regarded as being quite good; however the main difficulties in finding housing were experienced by workmen with families and "the single man of good character". These groups desired more comfort, privacy and homeliness of environment than was possible in a common lodging house; yet such accommodation was hard to find within a reasonable distance from the works at Rosyth, unless at the cost of tolerating overcrowding.

The inspectors had been informed that there was no ground in the neighbourhood at present available for building, and that even if there were, building speculators would have doubts as to the demand for houses after the completion of the works at Rosyth, and its transference to the Admiralty. Evidently not all parties concerned were optimistic for the

provision of any substantial amount of housing at Rosyth, let alone a Garden City.

The report then stated that the Contractors at Rosyth had not so far experienced any difficulty in obtaining as many labourers as were necessary, and that as long as this was the case, the Contractors were not concerned with housing accommodation for the workmen. Should such difficulty arise in the future, they would be prepared to run trains to Dunfermline, or even Kinghorn or Kirkcaldy, in order to solve the problem.

Dewar and Wilson's report was submitted to the Admiralty, which, however, did not approve the above statement, and doubted its accuracy.<sup>27</sup> The Admiralty recommended the following amendment, which was published in later versions of the report:

"The Contractors say that, so far, they have always been able to obtain at Rosyth a full complement of suitable workmen, who have never complained to them regarding their housing accommodation, and that, consequently, they have never felt it their duty - apart altogether from their legal obligations - to do anything themselves in the matter. They informed us that, should there arise a difficulty in securing a sufficient supply of labour, they are prepared to run special trains to Dunfermline, or even to Kinghorn or Kirkcaldy, in order to solve the problem. At present the men residing at Inverkeithing are conveyed to and from the works by railway."<sup>28</sup>

Although the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association had hitherto anticipated the full co-operation of the Admiralty in the proposed Garden City, the above statement seemed to suggest a certain degree of complacency over the housing situation. No indication was given of a willingness to provide houses, merely additional trains, and then only if sufficient labour was unavailable. Dewar and Wilson's report highlighted the problems faced by the incoming population, which, unless housing was provided in Rosyth, would inevitably worsen as the workforce increased.

### Footnotes

1. Patrick Geddes, A Study in City Development. Park, Gardens and Culture-Institutes. A report to the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust. Dunfermline, 1904.
2. Ibid.
3. Garden Cities and Town Planning, NS vol iii, no.29, Aug 1908, pp.110-111.
4. Statement given by Reginald McKenna, First Lord of the Admiralty, in the House of Commons, July 21st, 1908.
5. G.C.T.P. op.cit. p.111.
6. G.C.T.P. NS vol iii, no.30, Sept 1908, pp.130-132.
7. The Times, Sept 4th, 1908.
8. G.C.T.P., NS vol iii, no.31, Dec 1908, pp.152-3.
9. Ibid p.152.
10. G.C.T.P., NS vol iv, no.32, Jan - Feb 1909, pp.174-5.
11. The Housing, Town Planning, etc Act 1909, (9 Edw VII ch.44) passed on Dec 3rd, 1909, amended the law relating to the housing of the working classes, and gave local authorities power to draw up a town-plan for any part of their district not yet built up, so as to regulate future building development.
12. Reported in G.C.T.P. NS vol iv, no.33, May 1909, p.205.
13. The Times, Feb 16th 1910.
14. The Times, March 29th 1910.
15. G.C.T.P. NS vol iv, no.36, Feb 1910, p.275.
16. The Scotsman, May 24th 1910.
17. G.C.T.P., NS vol iv, no.37, July 1910, p.306.
18. Idem.
19. Ibid pp.308-9.
20. G.C.T.P. NS vol i, no.1, Feb 1911, p.3.
21. Idem.
22. The Scotsman, Jan 7th, 1910, stated that some work was begun in March 1909, the main construction work being started in May.
23. SRO/DD6 427.
24. Ibid. Quoted in Dewar and Wilson's report.

25. Ibid. p.5.

26. Section 16 of the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897, (60 and 61 Vict ch.38), stated that any premises, streets, w.c.s, drains, stables, manufactory, house, school house or factory, etc; found to be injurious or dangerous to health, by being unclean, unventilated, overcrowded etc, (also furnaces, chimneys and churchyards) would be liable to be dealt with under the Act.

27. SRO/DD6 427.

28. Idem.



### Chapter 3.

#### Further Delays in Progress. 1912-13.

Between 1912 and 1914, there occurred a near deadlock in the negotiations for housing at Rosyth. Neither the L.G.B.S. nor the Admiralty felt it their responsibility to provide the necessary accommodation, resulting in a delay which provoked a good deal of anger on the part of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association. Not only were the Admiralty unwilling to take responsibility for the housing: early in 1912 they halved the amount of ground available for such building, as was shown by a letter, dated February 6th 1912, from David Brown, the Assistant Secretary to the L.G.B., Edinburgh, to the Under Secretary for Scotland.'

Brown stated that the Board had considered the report of a conference held at the Admiralty on January 19th, concerning the future housing. Present at the meeting had been Sir James M. Dodds, K.C.B.; Sir George Macrae; the Board's Engineering Inspector and Sir Edward Raban, director of works. 2500 employees were expected to be drafted to Rosyth by 1916. The L.G.B. saw this as a serious problem, and wished to impress upon the Lord's Commissioners of the Admiralty the necessity for building housing for their employees.

Dunfermline Town Council had stated their intention to apply to the Board for authority to prepare a town planning scheme for the area. Although the Local Authority would proceed with the scheme, the negotiations with neighbouring landlords concerning such a large area of land would certainly involve delay. Consequently, the L.G.B. did not expect the town planning scheme to be finally approved before 1914. Brown emphasised that it had to be impressed upon the Admiralty that the Local Authority had no responsibility in the matter of providing houses, and that such a duty therefore lay with the Admiralty.

The Admiralty's decision to reduce the amount of land available for building caused the Board much concern. The letter continued:

"It was with regret that the Board learned that the exigences of the Naval Service demanded a curtailment of the land available for Garden City purposes. The reversion to the 300 acres was the more unfortunate as the Board's strong recommendation to reserve a larger area was made after much deliberation. The decision may also have the result of enabling the neighbouring landowners to stand out for a higher price for their land. If the whole 600 acres had been available, the first area to have been developed would doubtless have been the land to the South of the new road and to the West of Brankholm Lane."<sup>2</sup>

Brown explained that if the whole 600 acres had been available, there would have been no delay, even though the neighbouring landowners were holding back to secure a higher price for their land. The Admiralty land would have been sufficient for the purpose of building, and also, when the principles of the town planning scheme had been decided, it would not have been necessary to wait for the completion of all stages of the scheme before starting to build the houses. A further problem caused by the Admiralty's decision was that:

"The 300 acres now available are not so suitable for building purposes, while the situation is further from the centre of the works, a disadvantage in a place like Rosyth, where travelling facilities are almost entirely absent."<sup>3</sup>

In view of the Admiralty's decision, Brown suggested that the Lord's Commissioners should state, as soon as possible, the terms on which they would feu the ground to the north of the new road. They should also decide the types of houses required, the number of each type to be built, and the proposed rentals. It was emphasised that there was no room for delay, if the houses were to be built in time for the influx of employees expected in 1915, let alone the 700 permanent men who would require houses during the present year, 1912.

Brown further explained that the relation of the L.G.B. to any housing or town planning scheme made by the local authority or by landowners was that of a Central Authority, the Board's duties being administrative and

advisory. The position of the Admiralty was that of a landowner, and the Admiralty could themselves prepare a town planning scheme which the local authority might adopt. The execution of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909 lay with the local authority, and although the L.G.B. were willing to continue to assist the Admiralty, it was the Local Authority of the Burgh of Dunfermline with which the Admiralty would have to deal.

Brown concluded by warning that unless the houses were built soon, there would be further difficulties for the Admiralty, greater than those which they had experienced over the transference of their employees of the Torpedo Factory from Woolwich to Greenock.<sup>4</sup> While the L.G.B. had no personal responsibility apart from that prescribed in Section 61 of the 1909 Act,<sup>5</sup> the Board hoped that the President of the Admiralty would consider the matter with a view to advising the Government on the situation.

A further letter, initialled "J.L.", was sent to the Under Secretary for Scotland on April 12th, 1912.<sup>6</sup> The author stated that he had called at the Admiralty to discuss the housing question with George Lambert, the Civil Lord. The Admiralty had decided against preparing a town planning scheme, as they had no staff for that purpose and did not propose to appoint any. They were, however, quite willing to agree with any such scheme which had the approval of the L.G.B. The fact that the scheme being planned by Dunfermline might not be ready in time to meet the Admiralty's requirements for the housing of their employees did not alter this decision. Lambert had suggested that the L.G.B. might prepare a scheme for the Admiralty, who, being the landowners, would adopt it; nevertheless, "J.L." believed that Lambert fully understood that the preparation of such a scheme was not the duty of the L.G.B.

The Admiralty had agreed to give all necessary information concerning the number and class of all houses required, although this was on the

condition of the L.G.B. agreeing to assist in the preparation of a town planning scheme. Lambert also stated that he was prepared to go to Scotland if discussions there would be of any assistance. "J.L" hoped that this suggestion would be put to the L.G.B., and believed that the present deadlock in the negotiations could be solved if the L.G.B.S. would undertake the preparation of the scheme.

The reaction of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association  
to the delay in progress.

As has earlier been shown, the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association had, from the very beginning, taken a keen interest in the developments concerning Rosyth. The consequent lack of progress in the negotiations thus proved to be a great disappointment to the Association. The problem of Rosyth was discussed at the quarterly meeting of the Council of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, held on April 24th, 1912.<sup>7</sup> The point was made that in less than two years time some 10,000 people would have to be accommodated at Rosyth, yet the Government was showing no sign whatever of taking steps to meet the requirements, or of giving facilities to enable work to be done. It was agreed to appoint a deputation to visit the proper officials to see whether steps could be taken to assist the promotion of a scheme on Garden City lines.

Recent developments were later summarised in the June 1912 issue of Garden Cities and Town Planning.<sup>8</sup> The article stated that the Admiralty's land had been surveyed on behalf of the Association, through the local branch at Edinburgh. Under the leadership of the Edinburgh Executive, complete plans had been drawn up for a portion of the land south of the new road, which the Admiralty had intimated would be available for housing purposes. In addition to the visits of the Association to the dockyards at Chatham and Devonport, great care had been put into the project, the experience of all existing experiments being drawn upon, with the result

that the Association was able to have specifications drawn up and to have estimates submitted.

The Admiralty's decision to reduce the amount of available land seriously affected the Association's plans, as was explained:

"The plans prepared showed a civic centre on the highest point of the land, with developments in the best position for housing purposes, giving fine views across the water. While all this was going on, however, and while the Association were awaiting decision as to the terms upon which the land would be held, it was suddenly announced that the Admiralty had decided that no land whatever to the south of the new road could be used for building purposes. Thus was the labour and expenditure extending over two or three years absolutely wasted."

It was explained that with the preparation of Dunfermline's town planning scheme, and the extension of the burgh boundaries to include Rosyth, an idea seemed to have grown that the Garden City project was no longer necessary, resulting in a deadlock in the negotiations. The efforts of the Association were undiminished, however, and although they were unwilling to go into such expenditure again without an official guarantee that land to the north of the road would be available for housing, inquiries were made as to the remaining portion.

An important point was then raised, which appeared to have been somewhat overlooked by the Admiralty and the L.G.B.S. The town planning scheme itself would not solve the question of actually housing the workers at Rosyth, as it would not include the provision of the necessary houses. Of the 2000 families to be accommodated, the majority would require houses at rentals not exceeding five shillings a week; this was likely to result in a tendency to the undesirable tenement system, to enable a large number of dwellings to be built to the acre, thereby increasing the ground rent to be charged. A higher price could then be charged for the land in the first place, rendering cottage property impossible.

Since the town planning scheme would not include the provision of the cottages, the Association had always strongly believed that the Government

which passed the Town Planning Act should be model landlords and enable the land to be laid out with the utmost regard to the well-being of the future dwellers.

As regards the town planning scheme, the article pointed out that one of the most important considerations would be the number of houses to the acre, stating that if it could be known that the Government was in favour of a limitation of the houses on their land to around ten to the net acre or fourteen to the gross acre, that would have a great effect in the future developments of Scottish towns, where under existing conditions between 18 and 100 families could be housed per acre.

The article concluded by remarking that the deputation appointed to visit the Admiralty had been received by George Lambert, and although no official announcement could yet be made, satisfactory assurances had been received that the Admiralty was alive to the possibilities and to the responsibilities of the Association, the Edinburgh Executive being encouraged to proceed with its plans for the land north of the Admiralty road. Despite the Admiralty's refusal to either prepare a town planning scheme or to provide housing, it is evident that they were aware of the importance of such a scheme and the desirability of its being carried out on Garden City lines, the only condition being, however, that the work be undertaken by a separate body. The deputation had consisted of Cecil Harmsworth, M.P., chairman of the Association; Lord Charnwood, who during his chairmanship had taken a special interest in the matter; G. Montagu-Harris, the vice-chairman of the executive; J.E. Roxburgh, representing the Edinburgh Association; and E.G. Culpin, the Secretary of the Association.

The situation was further elaborated by E.G. Culpin in the August 1912 issue of the above journal, <sup>10</sup> in which he reported upon the quarterly meetings of the Association held on July 24th. Considerable disappointment had been expressed at the attitude of the Admiralty regarding the long-delayed proposals for Rosyth. Culpin mentioned that when the Association

had prepared their plans for the area, the Admiralty had appeared to want a price for the land which would render cottage building on Garden City lines almost impossible. Following their meetings with the Admiralty, the Association's deputation felt optimistic that their cause had been understood, and that there would be a good chance of immediate action. Unfortunately, this was not the case, the Association had been informed that no action would be taken by the Admiralty, as Dunfermline was preparing the town planning scheme. Culpin continued:

"It was decided to take steps which it is hoped will bring home to the responsible people a realisation of what their attitude really means. There is no doubt that the heads of the Department are sympathetic, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Lambert have both expressed their desire that something on these lines should be done ... yet the supreme opportunity which might have left its mark upon the whole of the town planning schemes in Scotland, is now lost by the decision of the Admiralty."''

Culpin evidently did not feel particularly confident of the town planning scheme being carried out on garden city lines, pointing out that if the Admiralty had agreed to allow a limited number of houses to the acre, then the Dunfermline authorities would have been able to fix their standard on a healthier and more reasonable basis than might happen to be the case in view of local tradition.

Culpin stressed that there was not a moment to spare if the workers were to be properly housed. The Admiralty had over-looked the fact that the town plan would not provide houses, and did not appreciate the difference between a garden city scheme and a town planning scheme. While the former would include the latter, the latter did not touch the former.

In strong terms, he concluded:

"To me this indifference is more than a blunder, more than a mistake, more than a tragedy - though it is all of these; to me it seems more like a crime. No other nation has such an opportunity to-day; no other people is preparing to start of itself a new city of workers under such conditions. The British Admiralty alone is prepared to go forward in this way. And there are 670 Members of Parliament!"''z

Dunfermline Town Council's visits to Garden City schemes.

As it happened, Dunfermline Town Council were not as strongly influenced by local tradition and the crowding of as many families as possible to the acre as Culpin feared. The Council's awareness of the importance of preparing the town planning scheme in accordance with Garden City principles was shown by a report, dated 1912, compiled by two members of the Council's Town Planning Committee.<sup>13</sup>

In their report, John L. Jack, the town clerk; and James Norval, the Convener, described their visits to various Garden City influenced schemes in England; in connection with the Dunfermline town planning scheme and particularly the proposed Garden City at Rosyth. The Councillors had visited Barrow - in - Furness, Vickerstown (in the Borough of Barrow), Liverpool, Wavertree Garden City, Manchester, Burnage, Birmingham and Bourneville.

At Wavertree, the Councillors paid special attention to the Garden City and stated:

"We found that the houses were mostly built on what we might call the hollow square system. In addition to small plots in front, every house had a garden behind, and in the centre of the square there were additional garden plots, and in some cases bowling greens and tennis courts. The average number of houses per acre is eleven."<sup>14</sup>

The rents of the houses, excluding rates, were: £15 - £20 for a house with a kitchen, living room, bathroom and two or three bedrooms; £21 - £23 for a house with two sitting rooms, a kitchen, a scullery, three bedrooms and a bathroom; £24 - £28 for similar accommodation to the previous class, however with larger rooms and in some cases four to five bedrooms; and £29 - £38 for a house with two or three sitting rooms, four to six bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen, a scullery, offices, etc. Evidently the standard of accommodation in this garden city scheme was far higher than that intended for Rosyth.



At Burnage, a Garden City scheme had been laid out known as the "Burnage Co-Partnership Estate" with eleven houses per acre, and a similar layout and similar accommodation to the previous example. At Bourneville, the Councillors remarked that the death-rate, typically of all Garden Cities, was extremely low. They had been received by George Cadbury, who had expressed his great interest in the problem facing Dunfermline Town Council in connection with Rosyth.

The Councillors were of opinion that the information obtained during the visits would be of considerable value in dealing with the town planning scheme, and noted particular points. The number of houses per acre at the various schemes was between six and twenty-five, with rents from £11 upwards. The tenement system was found to be practically non-existent, and great care had been taken to secure the maximum amount of sunlight and airspace in laying out cottages. A further important factor, however, was that the cost of land tended to be cheaper in England than in Scotland.

#### Further reports on the housing conditions.

While the delay in the negotiations continued, the housing conditions around Rosyth were gradually worsening. The Manchester Guardian reported on October 9th, 1912, that the men employed at Rosyth had a serious grievance about the housing accommodation.<sup>15</sup> The article stated that at Inverkeithing just two buildings had been built to meet the demand, "both of them barracks of the barest kind", neither of them providing accommodation for married men. Conditions of overcrowding were so great that in one small labourer's cottage of three rooms, a family of five had apparently taken in seventeen lodgers. This may have been an isolated incident, however, if the above report was accurate, the situation was without doubt becoming intolerable.

John Wilson, the architectural inspector of the L.G.B.S., found it necessary to extend his enquiry further than the 1911 report he had compiled with Thomas Dewar. His subsequent report, dated November 30th, 1912, dealt with further problems occurring around Rosyth."

Before discussing the housing conditions, Wilson mentioned a problem which had increased the difficulty of finding suitable housing for decent workmen. Residents of the surrounding districts had become less inclined to offer proper accommodation to Rosyth workmen, due to the number of casual navvies who worked for a few days a week so as to earn enough to spend many days drinking.

Wilson then commented upon the housing in Inverkeithing, where a new lodging house called "The White House Hotel" was being built in the centre of the town. The lodging house was expected to be ready for occupation by February 1913. It was intended for the higher class of workman, and would accommodate 306 men. On the ground floor there were to be two large dining rooms, reading and writing rooms, a shop, and a kitchen etc. On the first floor would be billiards and recreation rooms, also 80 bedrooms. The second and third floors would contain 226 bedrooms, and suitable bathrooms would also be provided. In the prospectus the charge was stated at 6d per night, however Wilson had been informed that one shilling per night may be charged for some of the better rooms. He doubted whether the workmen would be prepared to pay such a charge.

During May and June 1912, the common lodging houses in Jamestown had been filled to the utmost, however this situation had been relieved when the contractors started running a train to and from Dunfermline in July 1912. At this time, many workmen slept in the brick works or in a particular lodging house in Jamestown, as they generally did not have enough money for a night's lodgings. Consequently, some of these men had been apprehended by the police under the Trespass Act. It was also

overcrowding. He was, however, satisfied that the Public Health Act was being properly administered.

There had been strong agitation among certain workmen for the erection of huts, this being a common practice in works situated at a distance from large towns. The usual type of hut would accommodate 12 to 14 single navvies, and would be kept by a "ganger" or foreman and his wife, who would have separate quarters, the navvies having a dormitory and a common kitchen. The reason for the preference of huts was that they would be close to the works, although those who had experienced such huts did not recommend them, the common lodging houses being of a better standard. Wilson believed that such huts would only be necessary should many more navvies be brought in.

The main need was to alleviate the dearth of accommodation for the married workman and his family. Three main difficulties affected the provision of such housing. First, the surrounding land was under the embargo of town planning schemes, whereby any building erected meantime was liable to demolition without compensation. Secondly, this embargo would not be removed until the schemes were prepared and approved, which would take some months; and thirdly, the necessary sewers had not been laid and would not be completed before May 1914.

Wilson therefore recommended that the town planning operations be speeded up, that the Admiralty should town plan the land north of their road, feuing the land at the same rates (£10 - £16 per acre) as a considerable piece of land to the north-east. Also, 500 houses should be built as soon as possible for the Admiralty's employees, and the outfall sewer to the sea should be completed by November 1913.

Before the above report was sent to the Admiralty, the L.G.B.S. learnt on December 19th, 1912, that the contractors had decided to build 54 huts for 726 workmen. The Board therefore directed their efforts to the provision of houses for the permanent employees at Rosyth.

### The Garden Cities and Town Planning Association's Protest.

In the annual report of the Council of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association for 1912,<sup>18</sup> the Council recorded their "emphatic protest against the inaction of the Government" in regard to Rosyth. The Association claimed that the Government had neglected the finest opportunity offered to a European nation of creating a model town; had disregarded promises made to the Association that they should be helped in the formation of a Garden City scheme at Rosyth; and had also endeavoured to evade their responsibility for the housing of the thousands of people who would have to live in Rosyth, by sheltering behind Dunfermline Burgh Council's town planning scheme. The Government had taken no direct action itself, and unless something was done speedily, it was likely that the housing would be handed over to the usual type of speculative builder.

A similar view was taken by the Edinburgh and East of Scotland Branch of the Association. At the annual meeting of the branch, held on December 19th, 1912,<sup>19</sup> the chairman, Professor Lodge, referred to the Association's long negotiations with the Admiralty and the L.G.B.; these had left him with the impression of the extraordinary difficulty in dealing with a Government Department. He stated that the question of Rosyth had been slightly modified by the Town Planning Act and the burgh extension, and that the Admiralty had now entrusted their responsibilities in the matter to the burgh of Dunfermline and to the L.G.B.S. Professor Lodge repeated the point that there had to be a scheme to provide houses as well as a town planning scheme. He considered it imperative that public opinion throughout the country should be enlisted to compel the Admiralty to deal clearly with this problem. Concluding the meeting, Lodge remarked that if tenements were built at Rosyth, he hoped that the men who came from Devonport and Chatham would refuse to live in them, and that, he believed, might wake up the Admiralty.

In the February 1913 issue of Garden Cities and Town Planning, the widespread interest in the Rosyth problem was made clear, and, perhaps more importantly, the weight given to the Association's views on the matter.<sup>20</sup> The journal reported that its Annual Report had been quoted by the Press in practically all the leading newspapers in England and Scotland. The Association's representations "in regard to the dilatoriness of the Admiralty over Rosyth were given much prominence."<sup>21</sup>

The Association's lack of success in influencing the Admiralty was described at the 14th Annual Meeting of the Association, held on February 5th, as "perhaps the one disappointing thing in the work of the year."<sup>22</sup>

#### Official Statements in the Press, 1913.

On February 1st, 1913, David Brown, the Assistant Secretary of the L.G.B.S., wrote to the Admiralty, referring to an interview, held on December 10th, between George Lambert and the vice-president of the L.G.B.S.<sup>23</sup> The men acknowledged the importance of the development at Rosyth, and did not want any unnecessary delay.

According to the letter, the L.G.B. had been informed that Dunfermline's town planning scheme was nearly complete and would be submitted for the Board's approval at an early date. Until the scheme was approved, the actual development work could not take place, therefore the Board hoped that during the months preceding the approval, the most capable and interested people would be secured for carrying out the scheme. The Board believed that the best method of doing this was to put a statement in the Press to:

"stimulate interest in the right quarters, and at the same time afford all parties equal facilities for considering the question."<sup>24</sup>

The Board's suggested statement for publication was included, stating that the Admiralty had reserved an area of land at Rosyth, of around 300

acres, to be used for the efficient housing of their employees, and that they were prepared to receive offers to feu the whole or part of the area. The development was to conform with Dunfermline's town planning scheme, as and when approved by the L.G.B.; the submission of the scheme being expected early that year. The statement pointed out that much useful progress could be made in consideration and determination of the nature of the proposals for the scheme. Also, when the town planning scheme received the Board's approval, ample scope would still be left to those with experience in large housing schemes, for formulating proposals for the satisfactory development of the area, and the satisfactory housing of the employees.

All offers submitted for feuing the land were to detail the classes and descriptions of houses proposed to be built, the minimum and maximum numbers of each class to be completed within certain dates, and the rentals at which it would be guaranteed that the houses be let to the Admiralty's employees.

An estimate of the anticipated number of employees at the Naval Base by 1916 was then given. It was acknowledged that to forecast the future requirements with any certainty would be impracticable, however, at least a general indication of the figures was regarded as necessary. Between 2,500 and 5,000 employees were anticipated by 1916, based upon which the assumption was made that the number of officials and workmen in 1916 and 1917 would amount to 4,000. The estimated distribution of these men was tabulated as follows:

1350	persons receiving under	£75 per annum		
2500	, ,	, ,	between £75 and £100 per annum	
80	, ,	, ,	£100 and £150	, ,
40	, ,	, ,	£150 and £200	, ,
30	, ,	, ,	£200 and over	, ,

In addition to the above employees, it was likely that a number of married men attached to the fleet would be based at Rosyth. It was estimated that 2,500 such men would desire permanent residence at Rosyth.

The statement also mentioned that a considerable proportion of the employees would be transferred from England, and would accordingly be accustomed to the English type of house. It was therefore recommended that a type of house with not less than three rooms should be provided.

Following the above statement, Brown added that he believed it would be advantageous to also publish an advertisement in the leading newspapers inviting applications for feus, and stating the amount of feu duty required. The Board understood that the Admiralty were prepared to accept £10 per acre.

W. Graham Greene, the Secretary of the Admiralty, replied to the above letter on April 21st 1913.<sup>25</sup> The Admiralty agreed with the Board as to publishing a statement in the Press; however, they felt it was premature to give the statistics suggested. The letter therefore enclosed a modified, more generalised, version of the statement. Greene pointed out that the statement should also mention that any proposals for dealing with the property should be submitted to the L.G.B.S., who could decide whether the proposals conformed with the town planning requirements, before referring them to the Admiralty. It was not thought to be advisable at that stage to do more than to indicate a willingness to consider offers for feuing their property, as the Admiralty were not prepared to name a rate of feu-duty. Instead, offers received were to detail the amount of feu-duty which the applicant was prepared to pay, as well as the number of houses proposed to be built per acre. The selection of newspapers to be approached was to be left to the L.G.B.S.. Copies of the newspapers were later to be sent to the Admiralty.

Regarding the number of employees expected at Rosyth, the Admiralty's statement varied considerably with that of the L.G.B. Explaining that the

data was only an approximate indication and liable to variation, the statement read:

"A few machinery contractors' men will commence the work of erection of machinery during the present year. Their number will gradually increase, and augmented by Dockyard men and others engaged at the Submarine Depot, and in the preparation of the yard for work, may reach 500 men by 1916. From thence up to 1918 there will be a further increase of numbers up to 2,500. Between 1918 and 1920 there may be engaged at the Naval Base between 2,500 and 5,000 employees."<sup>26</sup>

The Admiralty evidently saw the increase in the number of employees taking place over a much longer period than the L.G.B. had indicated. A further difference was that the Admiralty believed a minimum of four rooms to be desirable, rather than three as suggested by the L.G.B., as was stated:

"A proportion of these men would be transferred from England and would accordingly be accustomed to the English type of house, having not less than four rooms."

The statement concluded that Rosyth might become the home of the families of many employees; however no definite information could yet be given.

Possibly in response to the above statement, following a deputation from the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association to George Lambert of the Admiralty, the Scottish branch of the Association asked for a definite offer of a piece of the land.<sup>27</sup> It was hoped that arrangements would be made for building to start at once, without waiting for the final approval of the town planning scheme. Lambert had expressed warm sympathy with the Association's aim to provide an example of proper housing before general building took place.

A report in The Times of October 25th 1913, showed that certain progress had been made.<sup>28</sup> According to the report, the Admiralty had entered into negotiations with a large English syndicate for the erection of workman's houses at Rosyth and near the Crombie Explosive Works. The article did not name the syndicate, however it was stated that in agreeing to part with the 300 acres, the Admiralty obliged the syndicate to secure



further land from Lord Elgin in order to complete their building design. No difficulty was anticipated on this point as Lord Elgin desired that no obstacle be placed in the way of providing housing accommodation. The houses were to be of the English model village pattern, and would be built of 9" bricks, roughcast, with hollow walls and ceilings 8 feet in height. Most of the dwellings were to consist of two apartments, and in order to ensure plenty of light and air, no more than ten houses to the acre would be allowed. The scheme was likely to involve the building of around 4000 houses.

No further mention was made of the above negotiations, which were never to come to fruition, as two years later, as will be seen, a public utility society was formed to provide the houses. It is interesting, however, to note that the syndicate proposed to build the majority of the houses with only two apartments, the Admiralty having required a minimum of four apartments.

Footnotes.

1. SRO/DD6 428.

2. Idem.

3. Idem.

4. David Whitham, in his paper 'Like honey from the carcase of the lion' : State housing and the Great War, explains that similar problems occurred when the Admiralty decided in 1909 to move its Torpedo Factory from Woolwich to Greenock. There was a great lack of suitable accommodation for the employees transferred, resulting in much discontent, some of the employees refusing to move to Greenock. (Paper presented at History of Planning Group Seminar, at Liverpool University, March 17th, 1979.)

5. Section 61 of the Housing and Town Planning Act, 1909, states that if the L.G.B. were satisfied that a local authority had not taken steps for a town planning scheme where one was necessary, or had failed to adopt a scheme which should be adopted, or had unreasonably refused to accept conditions imposed by the L.G.B.; then the L.G.B. could order the local authority to prepare and submit to the Board a scheme, or to adopt the scheme; etc. If the local authority had failed to adopt a scheme, the L.G.B. could approve the scheme, whereupon it could be put into practice as if approved by the local authority.

Also if the L.G.B., after enquiry, thought such a scheme was not being effectively put into practice, then the L.G.B. could order all that was necessary for the scheme to be carried out.

Therefore the Admiralty had to deal first with the local authority, and if that failed, then turn to the L.G.B. as in the above Act.

6. SRO/DD6 428.

7. G.C.T.P. NS vol ii, no.5, May 15th 1912, p.100.

8. G.C.T.P. NS vol ii, no.6, June 1912, pp.124-5.

9. Idem.

10. G.C.T.P. NS vol ii, no.8, Aug 1912, pp.167-169.

11. Ibid. pp.167-8.

12. Ibid. p.169.

13. Report by the Town Planning Committee on their visit to towns in England in connection with town planning. J.L. Jack, Town Clerk, and J. Norval, Convener. 1912. Dunfermline Town Council Minutes, 1912.

14. Idem.

15. Quoted in G.C.T.P., NS vol ii, no.10, Oct 15th 1912, p.232.

16. SRO/DD6 431. John Wilson, Report upon the house accommodation available for the workmen employed at Rosyth and for their families.

17. According to Wilson's report, the Burgh of Inverkeithing was also preparing a town planning scheme.

18. G.C.T.P. NS vol iii, no.1, Jan 1913, p.22-23.
19. Ibid. pp.27-8.
20. G.C.T.P. NS vol iii, no.2, Feb 1913, p.30.
21. Idem.
22. Ibid. p.47.
23. SRO/DD6 428.
24. Idem.
25. Idem.
26. Idem.
27. G.C.T.P. NS vol iii, no.7, July 15th 1913, p.174.
28. The Times, Oct 25th 1913.

#### Chapter 4.

##### The Rosyth Town Planning Scheme.

At this stage, it is necessary to look in some detail at the provisions of Dunfermline's town planning scheme. The July 1913 issue of Garden Cities and Town Planning published a description of the plan prepared by J.E. Wilkes, the Town Planning Adviser to Dunfermline Burgh Council, accompanied by illustrations.'

The land comprising the area for the new town was mainly held by three owners, these being the Admiralty, the Earl of Elgin and the Pitreavie Estate Trustees. The land south of Admiralty Road and a strip to the north was owned by the Government, that to the west was owned by Lord Elgin, and the portion to the east on the higher slopes overlooking the Forth was Pitreavie.

The particular problem was to make it possible to provide, by private enterprise, efficient and healthy housing for the majority of the employees who could not afford to pay a weekly rent of more than five shillings. The traditional urban form of cheap housing in Scotland had been the tenement, of which the author of the article, Charles C. Reade, wrote:

"It can only be said that the record of the Scottish tenements, from the point of view of the health and efficiency of its inmates, is a disgrace to civilisation. Not even under the very best conditions can the tenement house be accepted as desirable or even necessary in the new town."<sup>2</sup>

Dunfermline Burgh Council had recognised the undesirability of the tenement and had expressed its determination to prevent such buildings being erected in any part of the area. The mass of the population at Rosyth would be made up of employees accustomed to the advantages of the English cottage system, and Reade felt that to herd them together "in accordance

with the worst traditions of bad housing would not only be unjust but intolerable." As well as providing cottages at a sufficiently low rental, it was essential that the cottages be built substantially enough to resist the rigours of the Scottish climate, and also to provide efficient accommodation.

Lord Elgin was to feu a part of his land at an average price of £10 per acre, in contrast to the local price, which had earlier been suggested, of £40 per acre. Lord Elgin's land, along with land which the Admiralty was willing to be used for building, would suffice Rosyth for many years, amounting to a total of nearly 1,000 acres.

The description of the town plan, written by J.E. Wilkes, explained that a somewhat formal design had been adopted for Rosyth proper, the ground permitting such a design. Elevations of all buildings were controlled. The cottages in the workmen's districts were to be suitably grouped, and were to conform generally to type designs. The present building and road-making regulations were to be much modified so as to permit of more economical construction. With regard to the Railway Stations, the Passenger Station was to be positioned well between business and residential areas, the Goods Station being kept well away for the sake of amenity. The Railway Company's estimated cost for the stations was £42,000, the stations being the subject of a Bill which was then before Parliament.

No information was available to show what standard would be adopted for the number of houses to the acre. Reade contended that with the economic difficulties to be faced, it was doubtful if less than twelve houses per gross acre would be adopted, and that figure was likely to be higher if a rent of five shillings was to be obtained.

Reade explained that there was not yet sufficient information available to show whether the plan would solve the problem of the cheap house. He suggested, however, that without altering the proposed building line for

the cottage district, the roadways might in some cases be made less costly by adopting the cul-de-sac as opposed to the rectangular form of planning proposed on the plan. Evidently having certain reservations about the style of planning, Reade continued:

"Over the greater part of Mr. Wilkes' plan there is a decided prepossession for what he describes as 'the direct methods of the French schools.' Hence the frequency of the 'rond point' in his subsidiary centres and the lay-out of the main centre itself planned to command a full view of the Firth itself. We have no quarrel with this particular form of planning, but the question is whether it is the most suitable for ground that undulates so curiously as Rosyth and its vicinity, and more especially the most economical in securing a type of development that will not defeat the prospect of securing efficient housing for all classes. No actual criticism could be made on this point without careful consideration of the contour plan itself."<sup>4</sup>

It was not at all certain whether the plan, under existing economic conditions, would solve the problem of the cheap house. The area of land belonging to the Admiralty which was available for building was not sufficient to house any considerable number of their workers, therefore the Association still held the view that with or without the town plan, the Admiralty or the Government could not afford to shirk the responsibility involved. Wilkes' plan, although thought to be excellent in many respects, might be modified. The question, according to Reade, was whether the Government would:

"persist in cloaking this responsibility behind the usages and practices of that particular form of enterprise which has during the past fifty years failed so lamentably to provide a decent home for a decent working man?"<sup>5</sup>

Wilkes's description of the town plan, also a further analysis of the above mentioned problems, appeared in J.S. Nettlefold's book Practical Town Planning, published in 1914.<sup>6</sup> Nettlefold discussed seven town planning schemes, of which he regarded Rosyth as in many ways the most interesting of all. He pointed out that the scheme being under the direction of the

L.G.B.S., it provided an opportunity of comparing the methods of English and Scottish Government Offices.

Wilkes's description of the plan was quoted at length, and began by explaining that the work itself was divided into four town planning schemes, Dunfermline and Rosyth, Inverkeithing, North Queensferry and Brucehaven. In all, the schemes covered a total area of 6,200 acres, nearly ten square miles. The incoming population of Rosyth was estimated at 35,000, in addition to which 25,000 men were to be based at the port. This estimate was certainly higher than those of the Admiralty and the L.G.B.S. Wilkes pointed out that the land was very undulating, therefore an altitude survey had been made of the entire district.

Sites were to be provided for public buildings, each building in the town centre and the sub-centre being intended to form part of a uniform design. As regards the location, Wilkes remarked that the Rosyth area was very fertile and well wooded, also well sheltered from the prevailing south-westerly winds. For the provision of transport, street terminals were arranged so that each served as many streets as possible, some serving nine directions. It was also pointed out that regarding the amenity of the town, Rosyth was included in the Burgh of Dunfermline, the birthplace of Andrew Carnegie, who had endowed the burgh with an income of £40,000 per annum to be spent in public work of utility and beauty.

Nettlefold, writing in December 1913, commented that Wilkes' plan went into a great deal too much detail, there being far too much of the "chessboard method."<sup>6</sup> Similarly to the above article by C.C. Reade, he stated that exact information was not yet available as to the number of houses to the acre, and that the general provisions had not yet been settled. So far, however, he believed the scheme showed great promise.

Nettlefold also considered the problem of providing cheap housing, pointing out that the eventual population was to be 60,000, thereby necessitating at least 12,000 houses, 3000 of which were to be needed in a

year or two. Similarly again to Reade, he stressed that the building of tenements would be a retrograde step, despite the opinion of some experts who believed the only possible way to provide housing on a sound commercial basis at five shillings per week including rates was to adopt the tenement system. Nettlefold mentioned that in Germany the best informed town planners were "straining every nerve" to prevent further tenement building, and to adopt the English custom of self-contained houses for working people. He repeated the frequently made point that most of the incoming population were not accustomed to living in flats, and would avoid such accommodation if possible.

The appointment of Unwin as an adviser to the Admiralty.

The October 1913 issue of Garden Cities and Town Planning reported that a deputation from Dunfermline Town Council was to confer with the Admiralty authorities at Whitehall, with reference to the town planning scheme.<sup>3</sup> The article stated that Raymond Unwin had been appointed by the Admiralty to inspect the scheme.<sup>10</sup> Until Unwin furnished his report, and the Admiralty indicated their intention regarding the laying out of their land, the Corporation's proposals had been delayed.

The Admiralty were now in possession of Unwin's report, which was understood to be favourable to the main principles of the scheme. Unwin nevertheless differed with Wilkes upon minor matters of detail. With a view to arriving at an agreement on these matters, the Admiralty had therefore invited the Town Council to a conference between both parties. Consequently, Dunfermline's Town Planning Committee decided on September 29th to send a deputation to London the following week.

Unwin had for some time been interested in the development of Rosyth. On February 8th, 1911, at the annual meeting of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, he drew attention to the danger of town extension



being pursued to the extent of the laying out of new cities being lost sight of.' Unwin contended that there were more chances for promoting Garden Cities as distinct from suburbs than were often supposed, giving a number of examples, including Rosyth.

The discussions between Dunfermline Town Council and the Admiralty were described in a series of letters published in the Dunfermline Press of February 14th 1914, including an agreement between the two parties which had been provisionally concluded and was awaiting the formal sanction of the Treasury.<sup>12</sup>

Although Reade and Nettlefold had stated that no details were yet available as to the number of houses per acre, the matter had certainly been given attention during the preceding months. The first of the letters, dated May 20th 1913, was sent by John L. Jack, the Dunfermline Town Clerk, to W. Graham Greene, the Secretary of the Admiralty. Following a meeting of the Town Planning Committee, held on May 13th, Jack had been instructed to enquire whether the Admiralty would approve of the areas set aside for a stadium, a public open space, a round pond, and a parkway leading to the pond. The Committee also wished to know whether the Admiralty would waive all claims for compensation which they might have had under the Housing and Town Planning Act. It had been intended to leave three more open spaces to the north of the stadium, however the Superintending Civil Engineer had persuaded the Committee to allow these areas to be built upon.

Should the Admiralty agree to the above open spaces, the Committee proposed that the densities of housing on the area coloured grey on the town plan should not exceed twenty cottages per acre, graduated downwards to ten per acre according to their size and description. The densities on the uncoloured areas of the plan should not exceed 16 per acre, graduated downwards to eight, again according to size and description. On areas coloured red, fronting main roads, it was proposed to allow blocks of three storey buildings to be built, the ground floors of which, however, would

not be occupied by dwelling houses. Not more than eight houses were to be built under one continuous roof without a break, the breaks being no less than five feet wide.

The Committee asked the Admiralty to ensure that their feuars would bear the cost of making the roads on the plan, also the sewers required for these roads and their houses.

Greene replied to the Town Clerk in a letter dated December 16th 1913.<sup>13</sup> A conference had been held at the Admiralty on December 3rd, concerning the issues raised in the previous letter. It was pointed out that the following arrangements needed the sanction of the Treasury before the Admiralty could be committed to them.

Greene stated that the Admiralty were prepared to allocate, free of cost, 40 acres for open spaces and recreation grounds, subject to an agreement being reached concerning the maintenance of such land, and provided that the scheme as finally approved met with the Admiralty's requirements. The Admiralty were also prepared to agree to the Town Council's request that they waive all claims for compensation in regard to the allocation of land for open spaces, provided the scheme was adjusted, if necessary, to meet the Admiralty's requirements.

The laying out of the area around the round pond, also the alignment of the main roads leading from the Admiralty's land to the railway station on the east, and to Grange Road onwards to Dunfermline on the west, was then discussed. It had been decided at the conference that the decision on this matter should be left to the Admiralty, as Wilkes and Unwin were unable to agree on that portion of the scheme. The Admiralty favoured Unwin's proposals for a triangular scheme of planning for the area. Although it was with reluctance that the Admiralty felt compelled to adopt a view which was not shared by the Town Council, they trusted that the concessions which they were willing to make with regard to the widening of Queensferry Road and the erection of a boundary wall to the north of the land, would satisfy

the Council of the Admiralty's desire to meet their wishes, without detriment to their own interests. The adoption of Unwin's triangular arrangement would involve the re-planning of the subsidiary roads in this area. As these roads would form an essential part of the town plan, the Admiralty would request Unwin to make a plan of the subsidiary roads as affecting the Admiralty property, as soon as possible. It was also thought to be undesirable to modify the features of the plan around the round pond by arranging for it to be crossed by a tramway.

The Admiralty agreed to the Council's proposed density of houses, subject to a satisfactory arrangement of details concerning the regulations for the scheme. It was also agreed that a higher rent or feu-duty would not be charged for the land than would average £10 per gross acre, including roads, but excluding the open spaces.

On December 24th, Jack replied to Greene, stating that the Town Planning Committee were prepared to recommend the Town Council to agree to the above terms, subject to certain qualifications. "The Town Council were to take over the open spaces, also the Admiralty or their feuars or tenants should bear the whole cost of road-making. An alternative construction of the main outfall sewer was also strongly recommended.

In a letter dated January 30th 1914, Greene replied to Jack, suggesting further proposals concerning the scheme. One particular point concerned the width of the roads. While the Admiralty appreciated the Council's proposal to provide for roads of a lesser width than the statutory 40 feet, and of a much lighter type of construction, they had been advised that it was not probable that this concession would result in a considerable saving to the Admiralty and their feuars and tenants. While it appeared that such provision would result in a less cost per yard of street work than under the byelaw system, the proposed restriction of the intensity of building would involve a considerably increased length of street per house over that permissible under ordinary development.

Footnotes.

1. G.C.T.P. , NS vol iii, no.7, July 15th 1913, pp.178-186.
2. Ibid. p.178.
3. Idem.
4. Ibid. p.186.
5. Idem.
6. J.S. Nettlefold, Practical Town Planning, London, 1914, pp.88-9 and 130-135.
7. Ibid. p.89.
8. Ibid. p.133.
9. G.C.T.P., NS vol iii, no.10, Oct 15th 1913, p.242.
10. At a meeting of Dunfermline Town Council's Town Planning Committee, held on Monday August 25th 1913, a letter was read from the Secretary of the Admiralty, dated July 14th 1913, stating that Unwin had been engaged to advise and report generally on the proposed scheme so far as it affected Admiralty land, and that Unwin would shortly proceed to Rosyth. The Convener reported that Unwin had been in Dunfermline and had conferred with him and the Town Clerk with regard to the scheme. Wilkes had seen Unwin in London several times with regard thereto.
11. Reported in G.C.T.P., NS vol i, no.2, March 1911, p.27.
12. Dunfermline Press, Feb 14th 1914, p.3.
13. Idem.
14. Idem.
15. Idem.
16. Idem.
17. G.C.T.P., NS vol v, no.8, Aug 1915, p.149.
18. Dunfermline's Housing and Town Planning Committee, meeting on Oct 26th 1920, considered the question of open spaces at Rosyth. Reference was made to an agreement between the Town Council and the Admiralty incorporated in the town planning scheme, which had been passed on May 7th 1920.

## Chapter 5.

### Further Developments during 1914.

Although progress had been made with the town planning scheme by 1914, no housing had been built at Rosyth, apart from the temporary village of tin huts provided by the Contractors. The Annual Report for 1913 of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, presented at the annual meetings on February 16th, 1914, pointed out that the amount of progress which had been made did not diminish the force of the Association's protest as expressed in the previous Annual Report.<sup>1</sup> It was explained that if the progressive attitude recently shown had been adopted before, building might have proceeded at Rosyth.

It was understood, however, that the Admiralty was now making special efforts to facilitate housing progress. The Edinburgh branch of the Association had made a definite offer to the Admiralty for a portion of their land, and was inviting offers of capital from those interested in forming a Co-Partnership Society to deal with the question.

The L.G.B.S. were also rapidly losing patience with the delays over the housing. On March 4th, 1914, a letter was sent from the L.G.B.S. to T. McKinnon Wood, the Secretary for Scotland.<sup>2</sup> The Board were sending all available information on Rosyth housing, and part of the letter read:

"As you well know, had the Admiralty taken the advice of the L.G.B. at an earlier stage, additional houses might now have been in process of erection."

In a post-script, it was pointed out that the Admiralty could not "shuffle off their responsibility" on to the L.G.B. or the Local Authority.

The letter was accompanied by a memorandum and various reports on the housing. The memorandum concerned "the course to be adopted in the event of its being ascertained from enquiry that present housing conditions are

congested", and stated that the present provisions for the temporary workers at Rosyth were unsuitable for the permanent residents. At that time there were around 3,500 employees, many of whom were married or of the artisan class, and although their housing did not need attention under the Public Health Acts, it was certainly not all that could be desired.

Housing the temporary workers was a difficult problem, the memorandum observed that had the work been subject to an Act of Parliament or a Provisional Order, a clause would have been inserted providing for such accommodation. The Admiralty still maintained that they had no responsibility for housing their workers, any such responsibility, they believed, lay with the Contractors. The Contractors, Messrs. Easton Gibb and Co. denied any legal or moral responsibility and considered their concern with the workers to have ceased when they left the works. The Contractors had provided the hut village, so as to help solve the temporary housing difficulty.

The memorandum continued that if the housing conditions were found to be unsatisfactory, the Board might either apply pressure to make the Admiralty accept their responsibility, or exercise their statutory powers. The Board's statutory powers with reference to Public Health would enable them to prevent overcrowding and other such conditions. These powers could only be exercised speedily as a result of close and continual inspection with a view to ending overcrowding in individual houses. The Board had no power, however, to compel any individual or authority to provide accommodation for those displaced by the prevention of overcrowding. The application of these powers would therefore result in a dispersal of labour either to other districts where accommodation was available, or from the works entirely, thereby creating difficulties for the Admiralty in obtaining the necessary workmen.

Concerning the first option, the Board wrote that there was thought to be less congestion than there had been eighteen months previously. There

were at present 3,500 men, increasing to 4,500 in twelve to eighteen months time. This anticipated maximum number would be maintained for around six months, after which the number of temporary men would be gradually reduced. As these men decreased, the permanent workers would be drafted to the base. It was doubtful whether from that time onwards there would ever be less than 4,000 men engaged at the works.

Regarding the lack of suitable accommodation for the permanent employees, and the fact that better housing would be greatly appreciated by the married temporary artisan, the Board considered the proper remedy for the situation was for the Admiralty to build a number of houses themselves. The Board believed that the Admiralty were considering this proposal, and thought that under the circumstances they should proceed with building a suitable number of houses at an early date.

It was stated that the Admiralty were considering offers to build houses. The Board had no doubt that the Admiralty were now far more inclined towards a progressive policy in regard to the housing question than previously, and hoped that the question could be discussed with the Secretary for Scotland and the First Lord.

A summary of negotiations with the Admiralty was also enclosed, stating that the position regarding the housing of the permanent employees was not unsatisfactory, due to the Admiralty taking a more active interest in the question. It was thought that if such progress continued, there would soon be a satisfactory solution to the problem, otherwise, if any delay occurred, the housing situation was likely to become far worse. The Local Authority had tentative arrangements with all the large land-owners affected. This was regarded as important, as it was hoped that large scale development operations would begin that year, 1914.

It was later mentioned that on July 3rd, the Civil Lord had informed the Vice-President of Unwin's appointment. Unwin was now conferring with those who had submitted offers to feu the Admiralty's land and who might be

concerned with the actual development of the property, he would also advise upon the proposals for development and building which the Admiralty had already received.<sup>4</sup>

Although the progress was now seen as far more satisfactory, the Board emphasised the severity of the delay with the statement:

"Thus the position is now practically that which we advised in 1910 and have since from time to time pressed upon the notice of the Admiralty"<sup>5</sup>

A number of reports on the housing followed, including Wilson's report of 1912, which has already been mentioned. A memorandum from Thomas Dewar, dated February 3rd 1914, concerned his findings on a preliminary visit to Rosyth and Inverkeithing.<sup>6</sup> On Dewar's previous visit, additional semi-cubicle dormitory accommodation had been provided at Clark's lodging house in Inverkeithing; the house, accommodating 260 men, was full nearly every night, a number of men frequently being turned away. The keeper of the lodging house, Mr. Clark, also owned a new hut with accommodation for 150 beds in the temporary hut village known as "Tin Town", at Rosyth. Dewar had also visited Jamestown Square, where there had been no important alterations for the past two and a half years, the conditions having been scarcely habitable then. Dewar concluded that there was now a greater demand than ever for accommodation, and hoped to obtain information from the Contractors for a full investigation.

A further memorandum from John Wilson, dated March 10th 1914, stated that most of the housing was satisfactory. Jamestown Square was nevertheless described as a disgrace which "should be closed as soon as possible".<sup>7</sup>

The medical officer of health for Inverkeithing, A.S. Gordon, in a letter to the L.G.B. dated March 12th 1914, stated that conditions had improved since the report of 1911,<sup>8</sup> several new tenements and houses having been built and occupied. In his Annual Report for 1912, Gordon had stressed the need for workmen's houses. This would be relieved to a certain extent



by the huts at Rosyth and the provision of trains to and from Dunfermline; however there was much need for houses of a larger and better type.

From the above reports it can be seen that although some of the available housing was seen to be satisfactory, there was still a great need for improvement, also the provision of a substantial amount of housing for the permanent employees.

Although the Admiralty were certainly taking a more active interest in the situation, and definite progress was expected during 1914, the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association were still angered by the delays. The situation was summarised from the Association's viewpoint, in the April 1914 issue of their journal.<sup>9</sup> The article explained that following the Government's promise to consult the Association, schemes of development had been prepared, the Edinburgh branch spending hundreds of pounds completing plans. Furthermore, the Association had been "knocking at the door of the Admiralty without any appreciable result", being repeatedly informed that the moment had not arrived for action to be taken. The intolerable situation had been caused mainly by the:

"ignorance and stupidity of officials who have blocked the path of a movement which to them possessed the irremediable fault that it was something new."

The article continued:

"One of these high-placed officials asked one of our deputations why we wanted people to have cottages with gardens; they were, he said, far better off in tenements, where they would be warmer. One has never heard that there was any complaint of cold in the Black Hole of Calcutta, but the effect was not such as to suggest a repetition."<sup>10</sup>

It was again stressed that the town planning scheme would not provide houses, and it was a housing scheme which was urgently required, and could indeed have been brought into existence by the Association some years ago, had the Admiralty listened to its advice.

An important breakthrough was made on August 10th 1914, when an Act of Parliament was passed, "to make provision with respect to the Housing of Persons employed by or on behalf of Government Departments where sufficient dwelling accommodation is not available".<sup>11</sup> Under this Act, the L.G.B. was given power, with the approval of the Treasury, to make arrangements with any authorised society for the provision and maintenance of houses, etc., for Government employees where such accommodation was not available. The Commissioners of Works would also have power, with the consent of the Treasury, and after consultation with the L.G.B., to acquire land and buildings and to build houses or anything else which appeared to be necessary.

The L.G.B. could, with the approval of the Treasury, assist any such society by becoming shareholders or by making loans or otherwise. The burgh council would also, with the approval of the L.G.B., be able to assist the society. The Treasury, as and when they thought fit, could give money out of a Consolidated Fund for any expenses of a capital nature and which were incurred by or on behalf of the L.G.B. or Commissioners of Works, this amount not exceeding £2 million. Expenses for purposes not of the nature of capital expenditure would be provided by Parliament.

The Housing Act therefore solved the question as to who would take responsibility for the Rosyth housing, and indeed also proved to be a precursor for legislation providing for state-aided housing in later years.

#### The forming of the Scottish National Housing Co. Ltd.

During 1914, the L.G.B.S. conducted negotiations with the newly formed Scottish National Housing Company Ltd., which had been incorporated on September 15th, 1914, under the Companies Acts of 1908 and 1913, in regard to the provision of housing at Rosyth.<sup>12</sup> The July 1915 issue of Garden Cities and Town Planning reported that the Company had been formed in

furtherance of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association's efforts for the past thirteen years, concerning Rosyth;<sup>13</sup> also that the Company had been approved by the Treasury under the Housing Acts of 1914, the dividend being limited to 5% per annum. The share capital was £250,000 in £1 shares, and the L.G.B.S. had agreed to loan to the Company £900,000 at 3½% interest.

Various members of the Company were listed as follows: J.R. Findlay, Edinburgh, was to be the Chairman of the Board of Management; Sir William Robertson, of the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust, being Vice-Chairman. Among other members were Professor Lodge, the Chairman of the Scottish Garden Cities Association; Sir Henry Ballantyne, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Housing in Scotland; Bailie James Norval, Chairman of the Town Planning Committee of Dunfermline Town Council; while on the Advisory Committee, of which Sir George McCrae was President, was J.F. Roxburgh, described as one of the mainstays of Garden City work in Scotland, having been for many years a member of the Council of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association.

#### The transfer of the land from the Admiralty to the L.G.B.S.

The Housing Act of 1914 had solved the question regarding the responsibility for the Rosyth housing. A further problem remained concerning the ownership of the land. By December 1914, the L.G.B.S. had a draft agreement with the S.N.H.Co.Ltd., and a feu contract was also being drawn up between the Company and the Admiralty.<sup>14</sup> Various outstanding matters concerning these agreements were discussed at a conference held on December 3rd 1914, at the Admiralty.<sup>15</sup>

George Lambert, the Civil Lord, explained that his reason for calling the conference was that he desired expedition in the housing developments at Rosyth and Crombie. Sir William Robertson, the vice-chairman of the

Housing Company, detailed the results of the previous meeting of the Company's Executive Committee and his endeavour to interview the Prime Minister. He felt that unnecessary complications and obstructions were being caused by the fact that the Company was compelled to make arrangements with two Government Departments, and urged that these arrangements be limited to one department, this being the L.G.B.

Lambert fully agreed with Robertson, and stated that he had no objection to the adoption of any means which might entirely free the Admiralty from participation in the arrangements, leaving these in the hands of the L.G.B. Indeed, the Admiralty had always been reluctant to accept any responsibility for the housing, therefore the prospect of becoming finally free from any such obligations was no doubt warmly welcomed.

The point was then made that obstructions were being caused by the fact that the Admiralty held the land, and that many of the encumbering conditions and complications of procedure would be overcome if the land was vested in the L.G.B. This matter was then discussed from various legal points of view, Lambert expressing his concurrence with the request.

The Admiralty's agents, however, expressed some doubt over the power of the L.G.B. to hold land. Following discussion, John Lamb, the Assistant Under Secretary for Scotland, suggested that the question be put for the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown. C.E. Niemeyer, on behalf of the Treasury, added that his department was also in favour of the land being transferred to the L.G.B. It was then arranged that the agents should prepare a statement of the case for the Counsel's opinion.

On December 18th, the L.G.B.'s legal representatives, Macrae, Flett and Rennie,<sup>16</sup> wrote to John T. Maxwell, the Board's Secretary, explaining that the problem had been solved.<sup>17</sup> The letter pointed out that the Admiralty were willing to transfer the land to the Board, provided that the Board

secured for them the first refusal of the occupation of the houses, following their completion.

Regarding the question of the Board's power to acquire the land, the Crown Counsel had advised that this was granted under the Housing (No.2) Act, 1914, passed on the same day as the Housing Act, 1914.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly any such difficulty was now removed. Macrae, Flett and Rennie were taking steps to adjust the conveyancing, and hoped that there would be no delay in the completion of the transaction.

Footnotes.

1. G.C.T.P., NS vol iv, no.2, Feb 1914, p.32.
2. SRO/DD6 431.
3. Idem.
4. Idem.
5. Idem.
6. Ibid. Dewar report.
7. Ibid. Wilson memorandum.
8. Ibid.
9. G.C.T.P., NS vol iv, no.4, April 1914, p.77.
10. Idem.
11. Housing Act, 1914, (4 and 5 Geo V, ch.31), Aug 10th 1914.
12. Scottish National Housing Co. Ltd., Company file, Registrar of Companies, Edinburgh.
13. G.C.T.P., NS vol v, no.7, July 1915, pp.143-4.
14. SRO/DD6 1154.
15. Idem.
16. Sir Colin George Macrae and Robert J.R. Flett, of Macrae, Flett and Rennie, writers to the signet, 57 Castle Street, Edinburgh.
17. SRO/DD6 1154.
18. The Housing (No 2) Act, 1914 (4 and 5 Geo V, ch. 52), Aug 10th 1914, gave the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries in agricultural districts, and the L.G.B. elsewhere, powers with respect to housing, similar provision being made for Scotland. Section 1 of the Act gave the above authorities power, within one year of the passing of the Act, to acquire land and buildings for housing purposes; with the consent of the Treasury and of the Development Commissioners.

## Chapter 6.

### Developments during 1915.

#### The Dunfermline Tramway Problem.

By April 1915, it appeared that most of the necessary agreements were being finalised, and that work would soon begin on the building of the houses. J. Murray of the Admiralty wrote to J.T. Maxwell, the Secretary of the L.G.B.S. on April 1st, regarding the agreement between the Board and the Company, stating:

"My Lords must, however, insist on expedition as they are making preparations on the assumption that 150 houses will be ready by October."

Maxwell replied to the above letter on April 6th, explaining that some difficulty, and very possibly some delay, might arise as a result of the application by the Dunfermline and District Tramways Company for a provisional order. The situation was clarified in an article appearing in the Dunfermline Press on May 22nd 1915.<sup>2</sup> A tramway route had been authorised via the Grange Road. However, at the inception of the town planning scheme, Dunfermline Town Council approached the Tramway Company, hoping it would abandon the Grange Road route, and adopt a circular route including the Ferry Road. Despite this, the Company remained committed to the previous route, therefore the Town Council reached an agreement with the landowner, Lord Elgin, to ensure that the Grange Road route would be the first to be constructed. The Tramway Company's subsequent application nevertheless completely reversed the situation, with the Company intending to construct a tramway within eighteen months on the Ferry Road route.

The Dunfermline and District Tramways (Extension) Provisional Order was agreed to, and later received Royal Assent on July 29th 1915. It resulted

in much dissatisfaction.<sup>3</sup> John L. Jack, the Dunfermline Town Clerk, wrote to Maxwell on April 9th, stating that in view of the decision of the Parliamentary Committee regarding the Tramway Order, some delay was inevitable in submitting the town planning scheme to the Board for approval.<sup>4</sup>

Jack explained that the town planning scheme provided for the position and construction of the main arterial roads, town centres, etc., and contained certain relaxations of existing statutory building regulations. If Lord Elgin's concessions to the Council were withdrawn, the layout of the whole town planning area and the above relaxations would have to be reconsidered, as the Town Council was not prepared to face the claims for compensation which would arise if the scheme was proceeded with in its present form. Since the Admiralty's lands dovetailed into the lands of other owners, the features planned on the Admiralty's land could not be settled without the co-operation of these owners.

Jack remarked that the Town Planning Committee felt that the present unsatisfactory condition of the scheme was in no small degree due to the action of the Admiralty themselves. The Town Council had made clear to the Admiralty how serious a matter it would be if the Dunfermline and District Tramway Company succeeded in obtaining the Provisional Order for which they had applied. At a meeting in London on April 16th, the Admiralty had agreed to send Raymond Unwin to make a statement to the Parliamentary Committee, supporting the Council's opposition to the Order. It had been decided at the meeting that it was undesirable to send Mr. Cartwright Reid, as he favoured the Ferry Road route, and had been in negotiations with the Tramway Company. Despite this arrangement, the Admiralty failed to send Unwin, sending Cartwright Reid instead. As it happened, Cartwright Reid was not even called in by the Chairman of the Committee, and took no steps to contradict the statement that an arrangement had been made with the Admiralty, who were pressing for the construction of trams.



The Town Planning Committee had considered whether it was desirable that further action be taken concerning the Tramway Order, with the view of preserving the town planning scheme as it stood, however they had reached no decision. It was felt that the Parliamentary Committee which considered the Order did not appreciate the position of matters in Dunfermline, especially as the Chairman of that Committee had stated that he did not see that any agreement between the Council and Lord Elgin would affect the Commissioners' decision at all. The Town Planning Committee believed that the Commissioners, in ignoring the effect of that agreement on the town planning scheme, had shown a complete disregard for the interests of the community.

The Committee further felt that if the attitude of the Commissioners was to be regarded as typical of that of Parliament towards town planning, they would not be justified in advising the Town Council to incur any further expenses in regard to the matter. Under the circumstances, it was feared that until the town planning scheme was approved by the L.G.B.S., the housing desired by the Admiralty at Rosyth could not be provided without serious risk. If immediate building was absolutely essential, the Board or the Admiralty might wish the Council to abandon the scheme entirely, and to allow the area to be developed under Burgh Police conditions. Jack, however, pointed out that such a decision would be affected by two serious points, the request by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee that the area be town planned, also the order made by the Board authorising the preparation of the scheme.

Following the problems referred to above, a conference was held at the Admiralty on April 21st 1915, at which Maxwell and Unwin were among those present.<sup>6</sup> Maxwell pointed out that the Town Council of Dunfermline had reported that the sanctioning of the provisional order would wreck the existing town planning scheme, and that it would take at least a year to prepare a modified scheme.

The Scottish Office held the view that it would be most unusual for the Secretary for Scotland to set aside a decision arrived at after a Parliamentary enquiry. However, on a petition from the local authority, the matter might be referred to a Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament for a further report.

The Town Council was prepared to submit such a petition, but only with the active support of the Admiralty. It was explained that the effect of the suspension of the town planning scheme was that the Housing Company could not begin to build the houses required by the Admiralty although they were anxious to do so.

George Lambert, the Civil Lord, argued that the best solution was for the L.G.B. to authorise the Housing Company to build 150 houses, since any delay would make it impossible to build the houses by the end of September. Maxwell replied that this proposal had not been considered by the Board. The Company could not build according to the town planning scheme, which would probably be destroyed. Moreover, no future scheme could be anticipated. Additionally, if houses were built, it would then be difficult for the Admiralty to oppose the Tramway scheme further, as it would not be possible to argue that development had been prevented.

J. Walker Smith, the Engineering Inspector for the L.G.B.S., gave four alternative courses of action for the Admiralty. These were that the Admiralty could either persuade the Tramway Company to alter their plan so as to enable the town planning scheme to be proceeded with; or support the local authority's petition for a re-hearing of the case; wait till the local authority could re-cast the scheme; or proceed with building regardless of the scheme and any other restrictions.

Lambert remarked that the important question was to provide the 150 houses required by the Admiralty. If these were built, then consideration of the town planning scheme could be deferred.

A further conference was held on the subject the following day. No agreement was reached.<sup>6</sup>

The Housing (Rosyth Dockyard) Bill.

The problems caused by the Tramway Order subsequently resulted in an Emergency Bill being presented to Parliament on May 13th 1915, by T. McKinnon Wood, the Secretary for Scotland, supported by George Lambert.<sup>7</sup> The discussions leading to the passing of the Bill were detailed by the Dunfermline Press on May 22nd, 1915.<sup>8</sup> The journal reported a meeting of Dunfermline's Town Planning Committee, held to consider the above Bill. The intention of the Bill was to facilitate the early provision of dwellings at Rosyth, giving the L.G.B.S. and the S.N.H.Co.Ltd. absolute power regarding the scheme, overriding the authority of the Town Council. The Town Planning Committee disapproved of the Bill, thus a delegation of Dunfermline Councillors was sent to London to propose amendments which would have given at least some recognition to the local authority.

A memorandum was circulated to all the Scottish M.P.s, stating that the Council was apprehensive of the Bill's proposals for the reason that these would interpose a new overriding administrative authority in the area. It was pointed out that the Council was well aware of the need for housing at Rosyth, and had worked hard to facilitate this through their town planning scheme. Having reached an agreement with all the interested parties, the Council was about to submit the scheme to the L.G.B.S. for approval. At this point, however, a delay had arisen due to the passing of the Dunfermline and District Tramways (Extensions) Order. This order had meant that negotiations had to begin again with Lord Elgin, and as a result, the Town Council had lost concessions worth ten to twenty thousand pounds.

Following the delay resulting from the Order, the Bill was presented to Parliament with the intention of speeding up the housing scheme. Since the

Bill made no provision for reference of any kind being made to the local authority, this undermined the Town Council's entitlement to consultation by the L.G.B.S. before any building activity was undertaken in their area. The Bill gave the L.G.B.S. power to suspend every existing Act of Parliament applicable to the Burgh, and entitled the Board to authorise the Company to carry out any of the powers, and to provide any of the services, which had previously belonged to the local authority.

The local authority would thus have no influence in the arrangement and construction of houses and roads, yet their responsibilities would remain the same: they would be responsible for the public health, lighting, and policing of the area, also for the safety of the population. The Council's right to impose assessments could be suspended, yet they were still liable to incur expenditure. There had been no precedent for such legislation, and although there had also been no precedent for the conditions at that time, the Council believed such drastic measures to be unreasonable.

The Council's argument was that had the powers given under the Bill been conferred upon the Town Council, the Council would have been prepared to speed up the provision of houses at Rosyth, according to any plan agreed with the Admiralty, thus both realising the aims of the Bill and preserving the integrity of the local authority's powers. It was further pointed out that the Council had already incurred expenditure approximating £100,000 for the housing and was committed to schemes involving an additional £100,000. It was therefore hoped that the Bill could be delayed to enable the Council to put forward its own views. At this stage, the Council had still to receive any official intimation regarding the implementation of the Bill.

On May 17th, the Bill was discussed in the House of Commons.<sup>29</sup> McKinnon Wood explained that had the Tramway Company proceeded with their work according to programme, as understood by the Town Council in their preparation of the town planning scheme, he would have had no need to

introduce the Bill. He refrained from criticising the decision to change the tramway route, but pointed out that the effect of the decision was to upset the town planning scheme. The Housing Company was no longer able to comply with the town planning scheme as it stood, and indeed, under L.G.B. regulations any buildings which interfered with a town planning scheme were liable to be removed without compensation, therefore it was unreasonable to expect the Company to commence building while running this risk. The object of the Bill was to protect the Company against that risk. McKinnon Wood hoped that the House would regard the matter as a genuine case of urgency, as it was "absolutely essential" that the houses should be built, the present housing undoubtedly being inadequate.<sup>10</sup>

The Liberal M.P. for Stirling, Arthur Ponsonby, explained the points raised in the Town Council's memorandum, and stated that a deputation from the Council was travelling down to London. In view of this, he requested that the remaining stages of the Bill be taken the following day, in order that the deputation could be consulted.

McKinnon Wood agreed to meet the deputation, and consequently fully agreed to the Council's proposed amendments. These were discussed at a further meeting of the House of Commons held on May 18th. <sup>11</sup> Ponsonby observed that the amendments would secure proper recognition of the local authority, which had been omitted previously. The Bill was now to be operative until the town planning scheme was approved, which he hoped would be in a very short time, whereupon it could be modified so as to comply with any building which may have taken place during this intervening period. Ponsonby concluded that the Bill as amended was much welcomed by the Town Council, which now felt able to progress with its own proposals, and to co-operate with the Government in the immediate erection of houses.

In response to criticism of the amendments, McKinnon Wood argued that, on the contrary, the amendments would assist the progress of the building of cottages. He explained that the only difference between the Bill as

introduced and as amended was that the L.G.B. did not have the sole power to sanction the housing scheme, and that the local authority was now allowed to consider any proposals and to pass them through the ordinary procedure. A representative of the Admiralty had been consulted, who had entirely agreed to the amendments. No further complications were, however, anticipated. Should the Council refuse or unduly delay giving authority, such authority might be granted by the L.G.B.S.

Indeed, such delay was unlikely, as John L. Jack, the Town Clerk of Dunfermline, wrote to James Dodds, the Under Secretary for Scotland, on May 18th. He also confirmed that the Town Council would do everything in their power to facilitate the immediate building of houses and the provision of the necessary services at Rosyth, as described in the Bill.<sup>12</sup>

Lambert made the point that it was necessary for houses to be built at Rosyth, "at the earliest possible moment".<sup>13</sup> Unless the Admiralty could act on this Bill, through the public utility society (the S.N.H.Co.Ltd.), the Government would have to undertake the building itself, a responsibility which Lambert had:

"worked very hard for two years, or at any rate twelve months, to avoid."<sup>14</sup>

The amendments were finally agreed to, and the Bill received Royal Assent on May 19th, becoming the Housing (Rosyth Dockyard) Act, 1915, "to facilitate the early provision of dwellings, etc. for, or for the convenience of, persons employed by or on behalf of the Admiralty at Rosyth Dockyard."<sup>15</sup> The Act stated that if the L.G.B.S., in exercising their powers under the 1914 Housing Acts, made arrangements for providing housing for the Admiralty employees at Rosyth, pending the approval of a town planning scheme for the area; the Town Council of Dunfermline, with the approval of the L.G.B.S., could authorise an approved society to carry out any scheme; also, the L.G.B.S. could suspend any byelaws or regulations

operative in the area. Should the Town Council refuse to grant authority to the Society, or unduly delay to do so, the L.G.B.S. could grant this authority.

The Agreement between the L.G.B.S. and the S.N.H.Co.Ltd.

On May 19th, 1915, Sir James Dodds, the Under Secretary for Scotland, wrote to Ewan Macpherson of the L.G.B.S.,<sup>16</sup> enclosing two prints of the Housing (Rosyth Dockyard) Act, which had been passed that day. The Act having been passed, Dodds wrote:

"We shall now be buffeted by the Admiralty for all they are worth to get houses ready by the end of this week! I think it would be useful if you could have prepared, tomorrow if possible, a short note of the steps to be taken in regard to the formation of the Company, completion of the agreement, and so on, before building operations can actually begin."<sup>17</sup>

Dodds felt that the Admiralty believed everything was now ready to start, therefore he wished to know exactly how the matter stood.

Macpherson replied to Dodds on May 21st, enclosing a memorandum drawn up by Walker Smith, which explained the position of affairs.<sup>18</sup> It was feared that there would still be some delay before the first brick was laid. The memorandum confirmed that the Company had been formed and registered, had taken offices, and appointed some clerical and technical staff. The Company had not, however, issued its prospectus, and could not do this until they had settled the draft feu-charter from the L.G.B.S., also the draft agreement between the L.G.B.S. and themselves. Pending the passing of the above Act, it had not been possible to settle these documents. The Company was, therefore, not yet in a statutory position to "commence business".<sup>19</sup>

It was first of all necessary that the Company should have allotted shares up to their minimum subscription, this being £25,000. At present

they had promises of only around £10,000, therefore the Company was anxious to obtain considerable subscriptions from the local authority. If that failed, the Company could commence business without issuing a prospectus, however, it was likely that a prospectus would, after all, be necessary. In that case, it was regarded as preferable to state in the prospectus that an agreement had been reached with the L.G.B.S.

In order to complete this agreement, it was first of all necessary for the Admiralty to dispose of the whole of their land to the L.G.B.S. The Admiralty had again caused delay by postponing such action until a detailed settlement was reached regarding the exact location of the first building development of 150 houses. A meeting on this question had been arranged for May 26th.

It was no longer possible to grant a feu-charter, since pending the recasting of the town planning scheme, the exact area of the land could not be defined. The agreement with the Company was in the process of being adjusted, no further difficulties being anticipated in connection with this document. The Company had already obtained plans for types of houses, but some time would have to elapse to accommodate the preparation of detailed drawings, the laying out of the land, the preparation of quantities and the obtaining of contracts.

On June 2nd 1915, the agreement between the L.G.B.S. and the S.N.H.Co.Ltd. was amended in order to give effect to the Housing (Rosyth Dockyard) Act. 20. The amendments did not involve any difference in principle or in financial arrangements, but no feu charter was to be granted to the Company in the agreement. The Board, however, would still feu to the Company 316 acres, apart from 2½ acres which were to be set aside for a school, and certain areas of ground which the Board would convey to the town of Dunfermline. These 41 acres would be subject to the use of the Company during the building operations until these areas were actually owned by Dunfermline. This amendment appears to have made very



little difference to the agreement, especially as a feu charter would later be granted. The original feu charter had been drawn up during March 1915, and had not mentioned the above 41 acres.<sup>21</sup>

The agreement established that the Company was to be responsible for building on the land in accordance with the town planning scheme, and would maintain the roads which it built until these roads were taken over by the local authority.

The houses for the Admiralty workers were to be built in such numbers as the Board required, the Company being responsible for their maintenance thereafter. The Company would not, however, be bound to build more houses than as follows:

"150	dwelling	houses	during	the	year	to	31st	March	1916,
300	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	1917,
450	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	1918,
600	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	1919,
750	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	1920,
750	(or any other number as may be practicable) to 31st March 1921,								
giving a total of around 3,000 houses within six years from March 31st 1915." <sup>22</sup>									

In the event of these houses not being ready within the said time, due to the Board not requiring them to be built, the Company and the Board could agree on the numbers to be built and on any variation in the period of construction. The feu duty would vary accordingly as it had been fixed upon the above numbers of houses being built.

The Company was to be entitled to sub-feu or sub-sell land for building shops and business premises with the consent of the Board, although if necessary these could be built by the Company.

The Company agreed to submit all house plans and street plans, as well as agreements with the local authority concerning the streets, sewers, water and gas supplies, to the Board for approval. The local authority was also to approve the plans and constructions, and to agree to take over and maintain the streets.

The L.G.B.S. agreed to loan the Company  $\frac{2}{10}$  of the Company's expenditure on the houses as the work proceeded. This was estimated at £900,000, to be paid back at an interest rate of 3½%. The Company was also to pay the Board a "sinking fund" of ½% on all the Board's payments. Any surplus of the Company's assets would be put into the housing scheme, or into any other schemes approved by the L.G.B.S.

Further requirements were that the shareholders of the Company would be entitled to a cumulative dividend of 5% per annum from the Company's profits; that the Company would be responsible for the insurance of the houses against fire; and that the Company could sell houses to their occupants, or others, or to Co-Partnership Tenant Societies. Also, if the Company was to sub-feu for shops etc., the feu duty was permitted to exceed £10 per acre, only if the excess was applied to reduction of rents. The feu duties for public buildings were not to exceed £10 per acre unless such buildings were intended for amusement or profit. Any failure of the Company to meet its obligations was to result in all the money given by the Board being returned. In such circumstances the Board was entitled to cancel the agreement and to take possession of the land and buildings.

#### The Company's Prospectus.

On June 26th, 1915, the Dunfermline Press recorded that the prospectus of the S.N.H.Co.Ltd. had been published that day, and that the Town Council had contracted to take over the Admiralty's land for housing purposes.

Preliminary arrangements were already well advanced: contractors were to be invited to tender for the housing within the following few weeks.

On the same day, the above journal printed an advertisement for shares in the S.N.H.Co.Ltd.<sup>2nd</sup> The Company had a share capital of £250,000, divided into 250,000 shares of £1 each, of which 100,000 shares were now offered. The advertisement described the arrangement between the Company and the L.G.B.S., stating that the Admiralty, through the Board, was to have a first claim to the tenancy of all the houses, at rents still to be fixed. The intention was that these should as nearly as possible meet the net outgoings of the Company, including the 5% cumulative dividend on the share capital as far as expended on the housing scheme. In the event of the Admiralty not exercising its right in connection with certain houses, these houses could then be let in the open market. The Board was to guarantee the rents of these houses for a period of five years from their date of completion and their being offered to the Board.

The advertisement further stated that Dunfermline's town planning scheme aimed at securing the best conditions for housing the incoming population, and that the Company intended to provide houses in accordance with these conditions. So that the building of the houses could be done within cost limits which would permit rents affordable to the intended occupants, the land had been obtained on the reasonable terms described. The work was to be carried out on a large scale, thus economising greatly on the cost of the overall scheme. The shareholders would take no profit beyond the 5% dividend on the amount paid on their shares, while the Executive Committee and Advisory Council of the Company were to give their services without remuneration. The capital required for the scheme was £1 million, of which the L.G.B.S. would loan £900,000, the remainder being met in the form of shares.

On July 24th 1915, the Dunfermline Press reported that the Town Council had held a meeting to consider their application for 50,000 £1 shares in

the Company.<sup>25</sup> The Council had at first believed that the necessary money could be borrowed from the Government at an interest rate of 3½%. This, however, was found not to be possible, therefore the Town Clerk was sent to London to make suitable arrangements with the Treasury. On August 28th, the above journal reported that the Town Council had decided to borrow the £50,000 from the Public Works Loan Commissioners.<sup>26</sup>

Footnotes.

1. SRO/DD6 1154.
2. Dunfermline Press, May 22nd 1915. p.2.
3. Dunfermline and District Tramways (Extension) Order, Royal Assent July 29th 1915, Parliamentary Debates June - July 1915.
4. SRO/DD6 1154.
5. Idem.
6. Idem.
7. The Housing (Rosyth Dockyard) Bill, Parliamentary Debates. April - May 1915.
8. Dunfermline Press, op.cit.
9. Parliamentary Debates, op.cit. May 17th 1915, col.2091-2098.
10. Ibid. col.2092.
11. Ibid., May 18th, col.2206-2224.
12. SRO/DD6 435.
13. Parliamentary Debates, op.cit., col.2221.
14. Idem.
15. Housing (Rosyth Dockyard) Act, 1915, (5 and 6 Geo V, ch.49), May 19th 1915.
16. SRO/DD6 1154.
17. Idem.
18. Idem.
19. As defined by Section 87 of the Companies Act, 1908.
20. SRO/DD6 436.
21. SRO/DD6 433.
22. Idem.
23. Dunfermline Press, June 26th 1915.
24. Ibid.
25. Dunfermline Press, July 24th 1915. p.4.
26. Dunfermline Press, August 28th 1915. p.4.

## Chapter 7.

### The Building of the Houses at Rosyth.

#### The first 150 houses.

Following the many delays, work finally began on the Rosyth housing scheme in September 1915. The architects appointed to design the first 150 houses were Alfred Greig and Walter Fairbairn, of 31 York Place, Edinburgh. Their plan for the layout of these houses was passed by Dean of Guild Irvine of Dunfermline, on July 27th, 1915,<sup>1</sup> and comprised five house types arranged within the triangular area between Queensferry Road, Admiralty Road and Backmarch Road - known at that time as A1 Road. The two roads within the area were labelled A2 and A3, later being named Norval Place and Backmarch Crescent.

The house types were divided as follows: Type A - 4 houses; Type B - 12 houses; Type C - 20 houses; Type D - 51 houses; and Type E - 63 houses. Admiralty Road was to have 48 houses, in a combination of Types A to D, built in blocks of two, four and six houses, whereas Queensferry Road was allocated 36 houses all of which were to be of Type E, built in blocks of four and six houses. The plans for types C and D were passed by the Dean of Guild Court on July 27th 1915, those for types A, B, and E were passed on September 21st. All five house types were based on a recognisably English cottage style, with such characteristic "Garden City" details as dormers, sloping roofs and asymmetrical designs; the types all varied considerably in appearance.

Type A, a semi-detached house, was designed symmetrically with a projecting gable at either side, level with the roof. Between the gables, the roof extended more than halfway down the facade, punctuated with two dormer windows, both of which had a small pointed gable. The diagonal slope of the gables at either end of the house was counteracted by the presence

of a chimney at both ends. As in all the remaining house types, the cottage effect was emphasised by the mullioned windows.

Type B, again a semi-detached house, also had a symmetrical design with projecting gables at each end, however, in this case the gables only reached partway up the roof, the diagonal slope of the gables being continued in the design of the roof. The upper storey was clad in tile-hanging, again an English vernacular feature popular in Garden City architecture for its picturesque appearance. This feature also had practical benefits, supposedly keeping the interior dryer and warmer.<sup>2</sup> The remainder of the exterior, similarly to the other types, was rendered in rough-cast. The back elevation was of a contrasting design to the front, having a central double gable, extending below the roof at either side.

Type C, a block of four houses, was characterised by a low sloping roof at each end, reminiscent of such Arts and Crafts designs as Voysey's plan for a house near Guildford of 1896. This feature, however, was broken by the smaller gables forming part of the side elevations. Again there were dormer windows, of varying sizes at the front and back.

Type D, again a four house block, was of an asymmetrical design, quite unlike the previous three types. Here, the dormer windows had hipped gables with a diamond shaped pattern above the window itself. Instead of appearing above, or directly above, the bottom edge of the roof, these dormers broke the line of the roof as continuations of the wall. One end of the house had a low sloping roof similar to that of Type C, the other end simply having a further dormer.

Type E, a block of six houses, was again designed asymmetrically, and differed from the previous types in that the gables did not appear at the ends of the house. Instead, a projecting double gable dominated the left hand side of the house, with a single, non-projecting gable at the right hand side. The double gable, however, only came down to the first storey, the fact that this gable projected meant that additional space was created

for the smallest of the three bedrooms on the first floor of two of the houses. Adding to the irregularity of the facade were the various windows of differing sizes, placed in a variety of positions.

As regards the interior of the houses, Types A and B contained more accommodation than the remaining types. Type A differed from all the other types, in having a separate bathroom and w.c. on the upper floor, rather than adjoining the scullery. The ground floor contained a kitchen, a parlour and a scullery, with a larder, coal store and boiler; the upper floor contained three bedrooms in addition to the bathroom.

Type B also contained a parlour, a kitchen and a scullery on the ground floor, with the bath and w.c. adjoining the scullery. The upper floor again contained three bedrooms.

Types C, D, and E simply contained a living room and scullery on the ground floor, the bath again adjoining the scullery; also three bedrooms on the upper floor.

On May 27th 1916, the Dunfermline Press reported that the formal opening ceremony for the above houses had taken place two days previously.<sup>3</sup> At the ceremony, John R. Findlay, the Chairman of the Scottish National Housing Co. Ltd., had made a speech in which he observed that although there had certainly been a delay over the housing, this had at least ensured that a good deal of time and consideration had been given to the provision of houses. He explained that due to the great influx of English workers and their families to Rosyth, the houses had been designed to a certain extent in accordance with English ideas, and for this reason the houses were unfamiliar in plan to many of the local people. More important than this, he argued, was the effort which had been made to give the houses variety and relief, by broad streets, the apt disposition of different designs, and the considerable amount of grass and trees. Findlay congratulated the Company on the fact that within eight months of being



able to start work, a considerable number of houses were now ready for occupation. It was intended that 600 houses would be ready within the next year, in addition to which arrangements were being made for plans and roads in connection with a further 450 houses.

Findlay acknowledged the work of the contractors, the builder John Baxter of Dunfermline; Messrs. Street and Co., builders, Dunfermline; and Messrs. Durie, builders, of Methil; who had contended well against many difficulties, including the severe winter and the worsening condition in regard to labour and materials.

Although Findlay reported that the Company was highly satisfied with the work of Greig and Fairbairn, he confirmed that the remainder of the houses were to be designed under the direction of the Company's architect, Alfred Hugh Mottram. According to Findlay, Mottram possessed a wide knowledge of town planning and housing in England, and was also familiar with Scottish traditions.

Indeed, Mottram (1886 - 1953) had trained under Unwin, later working with him as an assistant on the Garden City and Garden Suburb schemes at Letchworth and Hampstead.<sup>4</sup>

#### The 2nd Development, 1916.

The second housing development at Rosyth consisted of 450 houses, types F, G, J, K, M and N; all designed by Mottram. Types F and G were designed in November 1915, and were passed by Dunfermline Dean of Guild Court on April 4th 1916. Types M and N were designed during December 1915, and were passed on the same date as the previous two types. Type J was designed later, dated July 26th 1916, and was passed on August 1st of the same year.

Of the types passed earlier in the year, Type N, a four house block, was symmetrically designed with a small pointed gable over the left and right hand side windows, with two square shaped dormers in the centre. The

back elevation featured a double gable at either side. As an alternative, tile-hanging was suggested above the windows of the end gables.

Type G, a flatted house, bore a resemblance to Greig and Fairbairn's designs, in the sloping roof at either side, and the gables extending part-way up the roof.

As regards the internal accommodation, Types M and N appeared to contain a living room and a kitchen on the ground floor, with only two bedrooms on the upper floor. Type F contained a living room, kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor, with three bedrooms on the upper floor. Type G contained similar accommodation to the previous type, although all on the one floor.

It appears that by the time the later house types in the second development were designed, a stronger emphasis had been placed on economy. The design of Type J was very straightforward, with no projecting gables or dormer windows. Planned as a four house flatted type, the internal accommodation comprised two bedrooms, a living room, also a kitchen area including a coal cellar, laundry, sink, boiler, bath and w.c.

On August 5th, 1916, the Dunfermline Press reported that two sets of plans had been passed at the Dean of Guild Court, one for 56 houses, the other for 31 houses.\* These plans must have included Type J above.

The Burgh Engineer, P.C. Smith, explained that the plans for the 56 houses, presumably Type K, were similar in character to those previously passed by the Court. Each house contained a living room, scullery, bathroom, and three bedrooms. Although the type was to be a flatted house, Smith continued, it could not be referred to as a tenement as the occupants of each house would have their own entrance from the outside, the two on the ground floor having an entrance from the side, the two on the upper floor having an entrance from the front.

Smith then turned to a point which had been raised in connection with previous plans, the lack of washing tub accommodation in the sculleries. He believed this to be a deficiency bad enough in a self-contained house, but which was even worse in a house such as this, where there was no back door. When this suggestion had been made on a previous occasion, petitioners had put in larger sinks to meet the difficulty. Dean of Guild Irvine hoped that this suggestion would again be complied with. David Deas, the Secretary of the Housing Company, confirmed that following the Burgh Engineer's suggestion, the Executive of the Company had put in larger sinks to serve the double purpose. They were satisfied that these would meet the requirements, and Deas added that when times were normal, and building materials and wages were cheaper, it might be possible to completely follow the Burgh Engineer's suggestion. Irvine asked whether these larger sinks would in fact be installed, to which Deas replied that they would, however the Burgh Engineer felt that ideally there should be both a washing tub and a sink. Smith admitted that the houses were being run up to meet an emergency situation, and that the compromise of a deeper sink was at present sufficient, although when the situation improved he would insist upon the additional provision of a washing tub.<sup>6</sup>

Irvine then asked whether some of the ornamental work on the houses might be dispensed with, and instead something practical introduced for the benefit of the tenants. Although he approved of the houses from an architectural point of view, he asked whether the Company was not perhaps spending too much money on the architectural effects, to the detriment of the tenants and their convenience. As an example, he cited how in some of the houses already built, the windows were too far from the ceilings. With low-roofed houses of 8'6", that did not give sufficient airspace to the tenants, and the airspaces above the windows became vitiated to a certain extent. He hoped that this point would be kept in view in the future.

Mottram replied that in the case of the flatted houses he had kept the windows as high as possible. In other cases he was prepared to add to the height wherever he could, observing that from an architectural point of view he had restricted the houses to the bare necessities. He explained that the Company's houses had been adversely criticised by higher powers than the Dunfermline Dean of Guild Court, and he had been asked to put more work on them. It was not stated who these "higher powers" were. Irvine remarked that these higher powers did not understand what a working man wanted for the minimum rent, to which Mottram replied that he had kept the matter of rent in mind more prominently than anything else, and explained that in the matter of architecture a little more was spent on houses occupying a prominent position.<sup>7</sup>

The state of affairs by the end of 1916.

A summary of the progress of the Rosyth housing scheme by the end of 1916 was given in a report in The Scotsman on December 23rd, 1916.<sup>8</sup> The article concerned the first Annual Meeting of the shareholders of the S.N.H.Co.Ltd., held the previous day at the Company's offices at 111 George Street, Edinburgh.

According to the report, 175 houses were now in occupation, and day by day, further houses were becoming ready. The Company had been behind schedule for dates of completion, as the delays in executing the agreement had rendered the programme impossible. 150 houses should have been ready for occupation by the end of March 1916, seven and a half months after the Company had been entitled to start work. (This, of course, was much later than the original date of completion anticipated by the Admiralty.) The Company had, however, made up for their lost time, and it was now hoped that by the end of 1917, 1600 houses would be ready, instead of the original estimate of 900 houses by March 31st, 1918.

600 houses were now being built, and the Admiralty had asked the Company to invite tenders for the completion of a further 1000 houses within the next year. To make it possible to build such a large number of houses in such a short period of time, it had been found necessary to take an extra piece of ground to the north of their feu. The progress which had been made had faced considerable difficulties. The winter had been wet and stormy, and the early summer one of the worst on record. Furthermore, the contractors had had to contend with a continual shrinkage of their workforce; this had been caused by the war, and was particularly increased by the passing of the Military Services Act. Railway siding accommodation had proved to be inadequate, there had also been delays in the transit of materials.

A further problem had occurred concerning the estimated rents for the houses, at the time when the first development was near to completion. The rents necessary to pay the interest and the sinking fund on the Treasury loan, also the 5% dividend, resulted in being higher than the prices which the occupants could reasonably be expected to pay, with the result that the Executive Committee had had to consider the whole future of the Company. This problem was serious enough in relation to the houses already contracted for, however the estimates for future houses showed a further increase on pre-war prices, this increase made it seemingly impossible to let the houses at economic rents. Prices would increase further in the future, therefore the Executive Committee set their case before the Government, thus managing to secure an amendment on their original agreement. This ensured that if the rents actually received for houses built during war-time were insufficient to pay all charges including the 5% dividend, the Treasury would pay the difference to the Company. It was further agreed that should the Company be required to build houses after the war, it should only do so on terms which enabled it to discharge its obligations to its shareholders. The Company was thus protected against the

continuance of such high prices after the end of the war, and also against its inability to complete its contracts owing to the inadequacy of its subscribed capital. At pre-war prices the amount subscribed would have enabled the Company to build the agreed 3000 houses. This was now unlikely due to the rise in prices, so the Company would not have to build more houses than was financially possible. Should this clause become operative, a part of the site proportionate to the number of houses which the Company had failed to build would be reconveyed to the Admiralty.

It was pointed out that by July 1915 the increase on prices in July 1913 was 34%; this had risen to 62% by July 1916. At present prices, the cost of the scheme was estimated at half as much again as the original £1 million.

The article then reported discussions concerning criticisms raised against the housing scheme. It was stated that since the houses lacked the "uncompromising solidity of the conventional Scottish tenement", they had been regarded as "flimsy and unsubstantial".<sup>3</sup> The Company had also been informed that they ought to pay less attention to architectural effect and pay more to domestic comfort. It was argued that the architectural effect had, however, been obtained by variety of materials, grouping and design, obtained by simple means so as not to materially add to the expense of the houses.

Regarding the internal arrangements of the houses, it was pointed out that there had often been conflicts between what the tenants wanted and what the designers thought would be best. Some tenants might decide to put the rooms to different uses from those intended, whereas other tenants might agree fully with the design. This problem had to a certain extent been made more difficult by the fact that the occupants were accustomed to a house of a definite type, having certain merits and equally obvious defects. The Company was by no means committed to any definite plan, and although a limited range of variation was available, it hoped to secure

enough variety in the arrangements to suit all tastes. Experience would show which arrangements proved to be most popular, it was stressed that the Company intended to regard this question from the tenants' point of view.

Additionally, there had been much criticism of the high rents of the houses. It was pointed out that the figures had not always been accurate, and that the rates had often been included in the rent. Despite suggestions to the contrary, the Company did not make any profit on the rents. The Company further stated that the rents were no higher than those paid for similar accommodation elsewhere. A comparison between the rents of the Rosyth houses and those of pre-war Edinburgh tenements, showed that while the Rosyth rents tended to be higher, the reason was that the Rosyth houses gave better accommodation. A large garden was provided behind each house, with a smaller garden in front. It was still argued that the rents were higher than the occupants could be expected to pay, however the Company refused to discuss the matter further. 10

Regarding the future housing, nothing had been settled concerning the contracts for the additional 1000 houses. The Company stated that it would be glad to know of contractors able to complete 1000 houses within one year, so far there had been difficulty in finding a firm capable of such a task.

Evidently, the housing scheme had met with many difficulties, particularly caused by the war; despite this, however, the Company certainly appeared to be making good progress considering the problems faced.

#### The 3rd Development, 1916-17.

As has been mentioned above, it was proposed that an additional 1000 houses should be built at Rosyth. A difficulty arose concerning this

proposal, when Dunfermline Town Council strongly objected to the site chosen for the development.

On November 2nd, 1916, J.L. Jack, the Dunfermline Town Clerk, wrote to David Deas, the Secretary of the Housing Company, referring to a meeting of the Town Planning Committee held that afternoon." The Committee had instructed Jack to intimate to Deas that:

"they emphatically protest against the site selected by the Subcommittee of your Executive. If the development proceeds on that site it will cost the Town Council a considerable expenditure which could be saved if the development is carried on westward of the present development at Backmarch, where facilities already exist for the supply of gas, water and sewage."

Jack pointed out that the Council was also about to advertise for tenders for the construction of a main water pipe for the permanent water supply at Rosyth. The pipe would stop where Brankholm Burn crossed Queensferry Road. If, however, the development was to proceed on the chosen site, the water would have to be obtained from Dunfermline District Committee, which would then have to be paid a rate of 2/6 in the pound on the rental of the houses. In addition to the financial aspect, the Town Council had further reasons to object to the site. Jack continued:

"I am further instructed to point out to you that the site your Company has chosen is the very worst building site in the Town Planning area. It is low-lying and part of it is subject to flooding and will require a considerable additional expenditure to make the houses fit for occupation from a public health point of view."

Returning to the financial considerations, Jack pointed out that although the Town Council recognised the need for additional housing at Rosyth, it felt that some attention should be given to the interests of Dunfermline. The development was to be carried out towards Inverkeithing, rather than Dunfermline, at a maximum of expenditure to the Council, with a



minimal return. Copies of Jack's letter were being sent to the Admiralty, the Secretary for Scotland and the L.G.B.S.

At a meeting of Dunfermline's Town Planning Committee, held on November 7th, 1916, the Convener reported that a deputation, appointed at the previous day's meeting, had attended the L.G.B.S. and had put forward the Town Council's position regarding the proposed additional houses, to the Board and to representatives of the Housing Company.<sup>14</sup> The Board and the Company had pointed out that expedition in the erection of the houses was absolutely essential, and that the site chosen could be developed much more rapidly and easily than the ground to the west of the present development. The Company, however, had conceded that on completion of the additional houses, it would proceed to develop the land lying to the west of the present development, and would acquire no further land until that was completed, with the exception of a small portion of Pitreavie Estate, which might be required in connection with the 1000 houses referred to above.

After discussion, it was resolved that the Town Clerk should write to the Secretary of the L.G.B.S., stating that the Committee regretted that the necessity for expedition precluded the Company from altering the site for the 1000 houses, however, they would rely on the Company's undertaking as above. The Town Council agreed to do its utmost to provide the necessary services for building the houses, on the understanding that the Board would do everything in its power to assist the Council in obtaining the necessary labour and materials. The provision of these services was to be treated as part of the arrangement between the Admiralty and the Housing Company, whereby the Admiralty was to provide facilities to the Company in connection with labour and materials.

This issue having been resolved, it was now possible for work to begin on the housing development. On February 17th 1917, the Dunfermline Press reported that the S.N.H.Co.Ltd. had let a contract to Messrs. Holloway

Brothers, of London, for 700 to 1000 houses to be completed and ready for occupation by Admiralty employees during that year.<sup>15</sup> A number of the houses were to be erected on ground lying to the north and south of Admiralty Road, on the east of the Queensferry thoroughfare, also on the Pitreavie Estate.

The article pointed out that the building of the houses, and the speed with which they had to be completed, would necessitate a very large workforce. The contractors had already formed a railway siding, near to the site of the houses, also the work on the foundations was well under way. To expedite the work, Messrs. Holloway Brothers were building huts and hostels for the accommodation of their workforce; the huts were to be centrally heated with canteen arrangements.

Regarding the houses themselves, a meeting of Dunfermline's Town Planning Committee was held on April 9th 1917. A letter, dated March 27th, from David Deas was submitted to the meeting, along with plans for the 1000 houses.<sup>16</sup> The Burgh Engineer explained the plans, pointing out that the Company proposed to build 198 of the houses with a type of concrete block which constituted an entirely new departure in regard to building construction.

After discussion, it was unanimously resolved to recommend the Town Council to consent to the Dean of Guild relaxing the provisions of the Burgh Police (Scotland) Acts to enable the houses to be proceeded with, also that the Council should approve the plans and materials to be used, except for the concrete blocks. It was recommended that the Council should protest strongly to the Company concerning the concrete blocks, stating that they only refrained from active opposition to this method of building on account of the known urgency for housing the Admiralty's employees. The Burgh Engineer was to be instructed to press for the concrete blocks being of a stronger composition than that proposed, also that the cross-ties should be more stable than indicated in the specification.

Further discussion of the plans took place the following week at Dunfermline Dean of Guild Court, as reported in the Dunfermline Press on April 14th. Three house types were discussed; the first having a living room, bedroom and scullery downstairs, with two bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs; the second type having a living room, scullery and bathroom downstairs, with three bedrooms upstairs. The third type was in the form of flatted cottages, each house having a separate entrance from the outside and consisting of a living room, scullery, bathroom and two bedrooms.

The Legal Assessor, John L. Jack, estimated that the total capital value of these houses would be £400,000, and questioned whether any petition involving such a large expenditure had ever been presented to a Dean of Guild Court in Scotland.

P.C. Smith, the Burgh Engineer, suggested a number of alterations on the plans, calling attention to the fact that the Company, despite having been repeatedly reminded of this omission on previous occasions, had still not provided wash-tubs in the sculleries, in accordance with the town planning scheme. Dean of Guild Irvine strongly recommended that the washtubs be provided in houses where no such accommodation was available. David Deas, the Secretary of the Company, agreed to carry out this suggestion.

The plans were consequently passed, as were the Company's plans for fifteen streets and for the laying of sewers for the houses. The Court also approved plans by different firms for both temporary and permanent shop and dwelling house property.

Now to the plans themselves. Mottram designed six house types, these being Types DD, EE, JJ, L, O and P. These types generally showed less variation than the earlier designs, Mottram evidently having put into practice the suggestion that less attention should be paid to architectural effect. Types L, O and P certainly bore more resemblance to the later

Type DD, also designed in February 1917 and passed on April 10th, was designed as an eight house block. At each end, the roof sloped down to the top of the lower storey, the upper storey being clad in either tile-hanging or half timber. The end houses contained a living room and scullery with adjoining bathroom on the ground floor, with two bedrooms upstairs; whereas the intermediate houses contained three bedrooms upstairs. The sloping roof, although economising on walling, evidently restricted the available space in the end houses.

Type EE, designed during March 1917, and also passed on April 10th, was planned in two variations, either as a block of six houses or of eight houses. This type was characterised by a large projecting central gable, with a curved archway covering the entrances to two adjoining front doors. Each house contained a scullery and living room downstairs, with two bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs.

During November 1917, a revised version of Type O was designed, this time as a group of six houses with archways through the block giving access to the back gardens.

Footnotes.

1. Note on layout plan.
2. Gordon Allen, The Cheap Cottage and the Small House, p.89.
3. Dunfermline Press, May 27th 1916. p.4.
4. A.H. Mottram obituary in The Scotsman, March 13th, 1953.
5. Dunfermline Press, August 15th 1916.
6. Idem.
7. Idem.
8. The Scotsman, December 23rd 1916.
9. Idem.
10. Idem.
11. SRO/DD6 440.
12. Idem.
13. Idem.
14. Dunfermline Town Planning Committee, November 7th 1916, Dunfermline Town Council Minutes.
15. Dunfermline Press, February 17th, 1917. p.5.
16. Dunfermline Town Planning Committee, April 9th 1917, D.T.C.M.
17. Dunfermline Press, April 14th 1917. p.2.
18. See Allen, op.cit., illustration facing p.31. Also Pepper and Swenarton, "Neo-Georgian Maison-Type", in Architectural Review, August 1980.

## Chapter 8.

### Further Developments. 1916-18.

#### The possibility of competition from Edinburgh.

During 1916-17 it appeared that Edinburgh Town Council had a strong interest in housing some of the Rosyth workers. Despite the efforts of the Housing Company, the local housing situation remained a serious source of concern. On February 3rd, 1917, the Dunfermline Press referred to an article which had appeared in the Glasgow Herald, stating that:

"A situation has developed in a matter of months to meet which normally almost as many years would have been available. In many ways we were unprepared for the war. We were certainly unprepared for the full manning of Rosyth, for the influx of thousands to a district in which no adequate housing was available. There would, indeed, apart from the demands of Rosyth, have been in the districts affected a shortage of houses, for the war has put a complete stop to all building not urgently required for national purposes, but the rapid development of Rosyth has created in the towns affected overcrowding to a very undesirable extent. It is impossible while the war lasts to meet the difficulty in any satisfactory way."

The question of additional housing in Edinburgh was later discussed. It was pointed out that since Dunfermline had been so deeply committed to the housing at Rosyth, this possibility was not at all attractive to Dunfermline. Edinburgh Town Council had shown an interest in creating a garden suburb for the Rosyth workers, although this had been discouraged by the Admiralty.

The article explained that Edinburgh was not necessarily trying to attract the Admiralty's employees away from Rosyth, particularly as the housing shortage was also acute in Edinburgh; however, Edinburgh Town Council recognised that a considerable proportion of the Rosyth employees, especially those who were more highly paid, would prefer to live in a large city for the benefits of its educational and recreational facilities, also

the better prospects of employment. At that time, approximately 2,200 of the workmen were living in Edinburgh, and apparently the Commodore - Superintendent at Rosyth had informed a deputation from Edinburgh that if they could provide 3000 houses within a reasonable distance from Haymarket Station, they would be performing a national service.

Certain proposals had been made for the provision of housing, consequently, the Burgh Engineer had taken a census of houses which might be made immediately occupiable. 432 such houses existed, having one, two and three rooms, evidently a far lower standard of housing than that being provided at Rosyth. Further proposals had been made to open up derelict houses condemned on public health grounds; to reconstruct empty shops which were unlikely to be reoccupied; also to adapt houses and offices in the New Town into dwellings for the workers. Although it was recognised that the re-opening of approximately 1000 condemned houses was likely to be strongly opposed by Edinburgh Town Council, the proposal nevertheless reflected the severity of the housing shortage at Rosyth despite the efforts of the S.N.H.Co.Ltd.; the waiting list for the Rosyth houses being estimated at 500 applicants.

Dunfermline was totally opposed to such a venture. However, the possibility of housing being provided in Edinburgh for the Rosyth workmen seemed remote, especially as the Admiralty refused to finance such a scheme. Furthermore, there was a possibility that in later years the Admiralty would impose the rule that employees must reside within three miles of the dockyard.

Despite the fact that such a scheme was unlikely, Dunfermline's point of view was made clear at a Special Meeting of the Town Council, held two months previously, on December 15th 1916.<sup>2</sup> The Council instructed the Town Clerk to write to the S.N.H.Co.Ltd., calling attention to certain propaganda occurring in Edinburgh, with the aim of attracting Rosyth

employees to reside there. Apparently, David Deas, the Company's Secretary, had taken a very prominent part in this propaganda.

The Town Clerk was to point out that this was wholly antagonistic, not only to the interests of the City of Dunfermline, but also to those of the Company; also that the Council had reasonable grounds for complaint that the Secretary of a Company whose operations were at that time confined entirely to Dunfermline, should be so actively identified with a movement which, if successful, could adversely affect both the Company and the Council. The Town Clerk was also instructed to request that the letter be submitted to the General Meeting of Shareholders on January 22nd.

Criticism of the housing scheme by the Scottish  
Labour Housing Association.

On March 3rd, 1917, the Dunfermline Press reported a meeting of the Scottish Labour Housing Association, Fifeshire District.\* The chairman of the meeting, William Adamson, the Labour M.P. for West Fife, stated that in addition to the decline in house building, great industrial development in the area had led to a house famine. In some districts, people would pay others to tell them of houses needing a tenant. In regard to the work being carried out by the S.N.H.Co.Ltd., he remarked that no matter how successful was this Company, their operations would only touch the fringe of the housing difficulties in West Fife.

John Beck, of the Dunfermline Trades Council, suggested a protest to the Government, condemning the failure to provide adequate accommodation at Rosyth, and protesting against the policy of granting money to a private company for the erection of houses. He suggested that the Town Council and local authorities be called upon to take immediate steps to have suitable plans prepared for dwelling houses, sufficient to relieve the congestion in the neighbourhood; also that the Town Councils and local authorities should



request the Government to give grants, free of interest, for the building of such houses, to enable the rents to be within the reach of the workers.

Beck believed that the housing should have been the responsibility of the Admiralty, which he blamed for the "house famine" in West Fife, since the Government had had to spend money on Rosyth rather than on the whole of Fife.

George C. Laing, of Kirkcaldy Trades Council, seconded the resolution, complaining that Englishmen employed at Rosyth were arriving in Kirkcaldy seeking houses and offering rents out of all proportion to the value of the houses, the result being that other workers in the district were either having their rents increased, or being unable to find any housing at all.

The actual houses at Rosyth were also adversely criticised. One member of the conference believed the houses to be far inferior to similar houses in Glasgow, and argued that the architects had not studied the climatic conditions of the district. He predicted that the houses would become the slums of Dunfermline.

An Englishman, whose name was not given, who had been transferred to Rosyth and had the "further misfortune" to live in one of the houses built by the S.N.H.Co.Ltd., declared that the houses were inadequate for the rent charged. They were not of the standard he had been accustomed to, and he believed that in view of the material with which they had been built, the houses would not last twenty years. A further Admiralty employee stated that the rent charged for the best class of house at Rosyth was 13/5 per week, the rent payable in England for similar accommodation being 6/6 per week.

#### The possibility of dissolving the S.N.H.Co.Ltd.

The question of the financial control of the Company raised much discussion from 1916 onwards. A memorandum of December 1916 explained the

situation concerning the financial interests of the Treasury, the Admiralty and the L.G.B.S., in connection with the housing scheme.<sup>4</sup>

It had become apparent that on account of the great increase in building costs, the Company would be unable to build houses at a cost which would enable them to pay anything near the 5% dividend upon their share capital. A Supplemental Agreement was consequently drawn up, whereby the Company was no longer bound to the original contract to erect 3000 houses, merely 600 houses under financial terms ensuring the payment of the 5% dividend. In the event of the Admiralty requiring further houses, the Company was to be required to provide the houses only upon such conditions as would ensure their ability to pay the dividend.

In October 1916, the Admiralty had declared their further requirements for 1000 houses, this request being of an urgent nature. As a result of a conference between the Executive Committee of the Company, the Legal Member of the L.G.B.S., and the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, held on October 30th, the Company was authorised to proceed with the arrangements for the additional houses, upon certain conditions, one of which being that J. Walker Smith, the Board's Engineering Inspector, should be placed on the Executive Committee of the Company for the purpose of representing the interests of the Admiralty and the Board.

The memorandum stated that:

"The reasons for this requirement were the desire for expedition in the completion of these houses, the necessity for economy and for a certain measure of control by the L.G.B. over the expenditure involved."<sup>5</sup>

With regard to the necessity for expedition, the Civil Lord wished to be assured from time to time that such progress was being made that there could be no doubt whatever that the 1000 houses would be complete in the time specified.

The financial position of the Government was regarded as serious. In addition to the initial loan to the Company of £900,000 at 3½% interest,

the Government had further agreed to pay annually to the Company the deficiencies in the Company's revenues to enable the Company to meet its obligations. Owing to the extraordinary increase in building costs, the Government would be faced with an annual payment of over £10,000 in respect of the 1000 houses.

Furthermore, Dunfermline Town Council, which already held shares to the value of £50,000, thereby being by far the largest shareholders, had:

"recently given unmistakeable signs of an intention to acquire control of the management of the Company which the amount of their holdings would enable them to do."<sup>6</sup>

In particular, the Council had given notice that it would oppose the election of Walker Smith to the Executive Committee. The Civil Lord had wished Walker Smith to be elected so as to protect the interests of the Admiralty, and to ensure speedy and economic construction. The memorandum continued:

"The Board are satisfied that a company controlled by Dunfermline Town Council could not either efficiently or economically carry out the work of building the large number of houses required by the Admiralty, and have reluctantly come to the conclusion that the only safe way of protecting the Admiralty and Treasury interests is that the Board should be given an effective control of the administration of the Company."

It was thus proposed that the Board should acquire a sufficient number of shares in the Company to give them a predominant voting power.

A conference was subsequently held at the Admiralty Chambers on December 13th 1916, between representatives of the Admiralty and the L.G.B.S.<sup>6</sup> It was agreed that the Government must secure a control over the Company's actions, therefore the Board should apply at once to the Treasury for authority to acquire 100,000 £1 shares in the Company, and that the Admiralty should support this application.

The following day, at a further meeting, the Treasury agreed to the Board's acquisition of the above shares. It was pointed out that by obtaining this control, the Board, as the main shareholder, could facilitate the buying up of the Company by the Government in the event of further difficulties arising. At a subsequent meeting of the Company, held on December 22nd, the Town Council withdrew its opposition to the election of Walker Smith.<sup>2</sup>

During October 1917, a revised Agreement between the Board and the Company was drawn up.<sup>3</sup> Among other provisions, the Agreement specified that should more houses be required by the Board than the Company's capital permitted, the Company was to dispoise to the Board any land acquired by the Company from the Board which was unoccupied by any buildings and which had not been sub-feued or sold. If sufficient houses to occupy the whole area of land were not required for occupation by March 1921, the Board might require the Company to dispoise the unbuilt-on areas back to them, or the Company might require the Board to relieve them of the feu-duty and other relative charges.

The Board now having a far greater control over the Company, it was soon suggested that the Company be dissolved. The Lords Commissioners of the Treasury asked the Secretary for Scotland, T. McKinnon Wood, whether it was necessary and desirable for the S.N.H.Co.Ltd. to continue. The L.G.B.S. had considered the arguments in favour of dissolving the Company, as was shown by a memorandum from the Board, dated March 18th, 1918, referring to a letter from H. Craig of the Treasury, to the Board's Secretary, J. Maxwell.<sup>4</sup>

The Treasury believed that under the arrangement whereby the shareholders were guaranteed their dividend by the Government, there was no longer any incentive to the Company for efficient and economical management, especially as only a small fraction of the shares were now held by private individuals. Secondly, the "disguise thrown over State

landlordism by this device" - the Company - had worn so thin that it was unlikely:

"to be much use in averting either political pressure or friction with tenants."<sup>12</sup>

Craig felt that there was a good deal to be said for giving the shareholders back their small subscription, and "letting the L.G.B. run the show."<sup>13</sup>

In their memorandum, the Board disagreed with Craig's suggestion.<sup>14</sup> Regarding the first argument, the Board pointed out that the guarantee of dividend had been necessary owing to the dislocation of business caused by the war, and while this indeed had the effect of removing a direct motive for economy by earning a dividend, the Board was satisfied that the members of the Company were of a high business capacity and public spirit, having given freely services involving a good deal of time and trouble, and would not allow reckless extravagance or inefficient management. Even if this had been the case, the presence of a representative of the L.G.B. on the Board of Directors, the Board's large amount of voting power, and its careful financial supervision of the housing scheme, would act as an efficient check.

The Board also disagreed with the argument that the Company had not operated as a sufficient buffer between the Admiralty and its employees, as owners and tenants. Reference was made to an enclosed letter from the tenants, protesting against the types of houses and their rentals. The Board argued that this letter showed that the tenants would have preferred to deal directly with the Admiralty, also that:

"had they been in a position to do so, there would have been greater difficulty in resisting the representation made. The fact that the tenants are endeavouring to get the Admiralty to assume ownership of the houses is, in the opinion of the Board, in itself evidence that they do feel the Company to be a barrier to their agitation, and it is very questionable whether any Government Department would prove so effective a barrier."<sup>15</sup>

It appeared that the L.G.B.S. wished to somewhat suppress the tenants' dissatisfaction with the houses.

A further strong reason against immediate dissolution was that the Company's existing contracts were extremely involved, and would not terminate until early 1919, before which date the Company would have to complete its arrangements with local authorities and contractors for extensive roadworks and other tasks. It would be extremely difficult for any other body, such as a Government Department, to take over these uncompleted contracts.

Concerning the future, the Board raised two important points. If further operations became necessary at Rosyth, these would, according to the Housing Act of 1914, in the absence of the Company, be the responsibility of the Office of Works rather than the L.G.B. The valuable experience gained by the Company would thus be wasted; also the land in any case belonged to the Board, who had, through its supervision of the Company and as Central Authority for the town planning of the district, special experience in building at Rosyth and in dealing with the local authority. Therefore, should additional houses be required at any time, greater expedition and economy would be secured by using the Company.

A further point, as will be seen later, was that arrangements were already being made to induce local authorities to provide large numbers of working class houses after the war; and it was possible that in some districts where there was an acute housing shortage, local authorities might not be able or willing to build enough houses, despite the offer of financial assistance from the State. In such districts, it might be necessary for the Central Authority to supplement the local authority by using such organisations as the Company. The Board therefore believed it would be advisable not to discourage the formation of such companies.

Furthermore, it was known to the Board that when the S.N.H.Co.Ltd. had been formed, it had not been intended to limit its activities to Rosyth.

While at present the Company had been unable to work elsewhere due to the uncertainty of obtaining labour, also other difficulties caused by the war, it was possible that the Company might undertake such work in the future. To dissolve the Company would obviously prevent such action.

Apart from these considerations, the Board felt that no advantage would be gained by the dissolution of the Company, and that such action would be an ungracious return for the public spirit shown by its members, and would cast an unmerited slur on its administration during the difficulties of the war, on the ground of a "change in circumstances" for which it was not responsible.

The Board concluded that if the Treasury, after reading the Board's statement, still wished to dissolve the Company, this could only be carried through by the voting powers of the Board, greater than that of the other shareholders: a course which the Board would be most unwilling to adopt. It was also pointed out that the new agreement with the Company, which was under consideration, would be more favourable to the Treasury. As the Company had agreed to the essential parts of the agreement, the Board hoped it would be concluded as soon as possible.

Tenants' grievances concerning the Rosyth houses.

As has been shown, the tenants at Rosyth had protested against the housing which had been provided. The L.G.B.S. was in fact referring to a letter sent to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty by the Rosyth Ratepayers Association. Stamped 'Secretary for Scotland, March 19th, 1918'; the letter, signed D. Raper, Chairman, and F.J. Burnett, Secretary, began as follows:

"We, Admiralty employees residing at Rosyth Garden City, wish to bring before you, the feeling that exists in the Garden City with respect to the houses we are practically forced to live in." 16

The employees explained that at the time when they volunteered for Rosyth, notices had been posted in the Southern Yards stating that the rent for single men's quarters would be 3s 6d per week, and that when the houses were completed, they would be let at a reasonable rent. They had expected the houses to be built to suit the needs of the people transferred to Rosyth. However, the residents had not found the houses suitable, and believed that the rents were not in accordance with the accommodation provided. The letter continued:

"The houses should have been built after the style of those in which we are accustomed to live, prior to our transference to Rosyth, and not according to the ideas of those whose position in life will not compel them to live in them. Of the various types of houses that have been, or are being erected, only one type has the accommodation in any way approaching that which the residents desire. This type (Type B) 1st Development is rented at a sum far beyond the reach of any mechanic, 10s 11d. For a labourer to pay this rent, is entirely out of the question."

The employees admitted that there had been difficulty in obtaining materials during the war, however they questioned why such types of houses continued to be built, which apparently made the occupants dissatisfied, and others reluctant to occupy them. It was observed that, owing to the lack of available accommodation, many employees had had to part with a large portion of their homes, presumably by taking in lodgers.

Specific complaints about the construction of the houses concerned badly fitting doors and windows, which rendered the houses cold and draughty; sloping roofs in bedrooms, and the large number of corners, which tended to make cleaning a difficulty. Apparently, in the first development, the houses had no roof boards:

"which means that there is nothing between the occupants and the heavens but a plaster ceiling and very open tiles. In the recent bad weather, it has been known for snow to drift between the tiles and lie on the ceiling and thaw, penetrate through and cause great inconvenience."



Regarding the third development, although the S.N.H.Co.Ltd. claimed to have met most, if not all, of the tenants' needs; this was denied by the employees, who claimed that the Company had never met the representatives of the residents. The residents did not approve of the sizes of the rooms in these houses, and stated that the only type to have two rooms downstairs, as was usual in England, was the E.E. 2nd Intermediate. Concerning these rooms, it was remarked that the living room or kitchen measured 17 x 11 feet, this was agreed to be a good size, whereas the sitting room was "hardly sufficient to accommodate two armchairs". According to the employees, the small bedrooms in nearly all the houses measured 11 feet by 10 feet 9 inches, "not much larger than the good sized bed closets in an Edinburgh flat".

Apart from other incidental complaints, a major issue was that in many intermediate houses there was no outside path from the front to the back of the house. The letter observed that in all the houses the fencing in the back gardens finished at the main outside wall, there being no passageway at the bottom of the gardens. In strong terms, it was stressed that in most of the intermediate houses:

"there is no alternative but to bring coals, manure, refuse, etc., (which should be carted from the back of the house) through the living room. We wonder how many of the houses in which you gentlemen live have coals, bicycles, prams, manure, etc., carried through the only room in which you have to live and dine? Eminent hygienists tell us that corners harbour dirt, and bring disease. This being the case, the houses here must have been designed by a German, with the idea of spreading disease. There are more corners in one of these houses than in any polygon which you gentlemen can conceive." (3)

The employees then suggested that the houses should be built by the Admiralty itself; similar to the houses they had occupied in the South, having a parlour, dining room, scullery, bathroom and three bedrooms, the rental not exceeding 7s per week. It was evident that the employees were

unaware of the Admiralty's viewpoint over the past years concerning taking the responsibility for the housing.

Although the transferees from the South had received an increase of 2s per week, they argued that this had not compensated them for the "exorbitant rents, insufficient accommodation, lack of shopping facilities and schools" at Rosyth.

As has been mentioned earlier, the tenants suggested, as well as an immediate reduction of the rents, an inquiry into the possibility of the Admiralty taking over control and management of the houses, concluding that:

"the future welfare of the district would be better secured by the Admiralty themselves than by a private company whose primary interests are to ensure a dividend of 5% per annum."<sup>20</sup>

For the reasons expressed by the L.G.B.S. as detailed above, the tenants' protests had little immediate effect.

Footnotes.

1. Dunfermline Press, February 3rd, 1917. p.2.
2. Special Meeting of the Town Council, December 15th 1916, Dunfermline Town Council Minutes.
3. Dunfermline Press, March 3rd 1917. p.6.
4. SRO/DD6 443.
5. Idem.
6. Idem.
7. Idem.
8. Idem.
9. Idem. letter from J. Maxwell, Secretary, L.G.B.S., dated December 26th 1916, to the Under Secretary for Scotland.
10. SRO/DD6 448.
11. SRO/DD6 452.
12. SRO/DD6 448.
13. Idem.
14. SRO/DD6 452.
15. Idem.
16. Idem.
17. Idem.
18. Idem.
19. Idem.
20. Idem.

## Chapter 9.

### Reports and Further Negotiations. 1918-24.

#### Further reports on Rosyth.

In June 1918, Robert Munro, the President of the L.G.B.S., appointed a Women's House Planning Committee to visit various houses recently erected in Scotland by the L.G.B.S. on behalf of the Minister of Munitions and the Admiralty; the houses provided by the S.N.H.Co.Ltd. at Rosyth; also any other housing schemes selected after consultation with the Board. The Committee was also to report their views from the housewife's standpoint on the planning and arrangement of the houses, and to submit general recommendations with regard to the planning and arrangement of houses for the working classes.' The appointment of this Committee was similar to those appointed during 1918 and 1919 in England and Wales by the Ministry of Reconstruction, which will be dealt with later.

The Committee's report on Rosyth briefly summarised the accommodation provided in the houses, and by the scheme in general, mentioning that Rosyth was the largest scheme under the general supervision of the L.G.B.S. Some bad features had been noted in the earlier developments, therefore the Committee was glad to record considerable improvements in the last. The outstanding defects, however, were the general restriction of floor space; inadequate working, washing and storage facilities; the small bathrooms, of which the position, opening off the scullery, was found to be objectionable; the undersized bath; the walls being distempered, therefore unwashable; and the absence of a lobby. In addition, the Committee criticised the steepness and narrowness of the stairs; the badly coom-ceiled bedrooms; the fact that the fireplaces in smaller rooms could only be of use as ventilating shafts; the aforementioned access to the back door

and scullery in intermediate houses being only through the living room; and finally, in certain cases, inferior workmanship and fittings."

The housing scheme certainly appears to have been under fire from many quarters, possibly the most striking criticism appeared in The Mail for Leven, Wemyss and East Fife, on September 17th, 1919.<sup>3</sup> Entitled, "Rosyth not a model city. Water and air supply impure. Appalling Revelations in Medical Report", the article delivered a remarkable condemnation of the conditions at Rosyth, particularly in view of the fact that Rosyth had, from the outset, been planned as a healthy, attractive town.

It was reported that a Dr. W. Johnstone Calder had sent a letter regarding the conditions to the Scottish Board of Health.<sup>4</sup> The letter had been refuted by Dr. Frederick Dittmar of Edinburgh and Dr. A.J. McGregor, the medical officer of the burgh of Dunfermline; both of whom affirmed that there was nothing wrong with the sanitation of the town. A Health Committee, including Dr. Johnstone Calder, was subsequently appointed at Rosyth to investigate the complaint, and to submit a report on the matter.

According to The Mail, the Committee's report confirmed that the air and water supply were impure, and that:

"The site of the town was unsuitable, and it was almost beyond human comprehension that the Government could have been duped into embarking financially upon such a scheme, which must prove sooner or later to be a deathtrap."<sup>5</sup>

A lurid description of the town then followed, stating that many of the houses were unfit for human habitation, the ventilation of the houses being defective, as were the sewers. In many cases, houses were overcrowded, endangering the health of the inhabitants. The description continued:

"In the burn which runs through the village, were found a number of dead rats, two dead cats, a dog's skin, carcass of a dog, and the decomposed remains of some animal which could not be identified before being buried by the Sanitary Inspector and his burial party. No attempt had been made by the local authorities to exterminate the rat pest.

Rats swarmed all over the place and into the houses, and it was a wonder that no disease such as cholera had broken out."<sup>6</sup>

At a meeting held to discuss the Committee's report, Johnstone Calder declared that he felt it was his duty to denounce the unsanitary conditions at Rosyth; he regretted causing ill-feeling in some quarters, however he would not stand tamely by without making his protest. If the situation was allowed to continue, the people of Rosyth would soon have to move, as "the place was rotten with diptheria". He also complained at the abuse which he had received from the Press and also from Dunfermline Town Council, and put the whole blame on the Government for "dumping the people of England at Rosyth." The meeting unanimously agreed to sign the petition in connection with the complaint, and to forward it to the Board of Health.

On September 13th, the Dunfermline Press also reported the Committee's findings, the houses having been described as being: "of the most primitive and medieval type imaginable."<sup>7</sup>

#### The question of future operations at Rosyth, 1919.

On January 16th 1919, three representatives of the S.N.H.Co.Ltd., Sir John Findlay, Sir William Robertson and David Deas, met the Vice-President and the Medical Member of the L.G.B.S., to discuss the possible future operations of the Company.<sup>8</sup>

Findlay explained that as the Admiralty had originally intended a total of 3000 houses to be built, of which 1600 were practically completed; the Company was anxious to know the Admiralty's intentions regarding the remaining 1400 houses. The Vice-President of the L.G.B.S. agreed to communicate with the Admiralty on this question.<sup>9</sup>

The Vice-President later asked as to the possibility of the Company being able to assist in the post-war housing schemes of local authorities. The need for such assistance might arise where local authorities did not

have the necessary staff or experience, or where the local authority refused to provide the necessary houses and it would be necessary for the Government to undertake the work.

Robertson, however, expressed strong doubts concerning this possibility. He pointed out that a great deal would depend on the reputation which had been established by the Company in connection with their operations at Rosyth. He scarcely thought that the Company could be regarded as a body of experts. A considerable amount of ill-informed criticism had already been levelled at the Company, however, Robertson explained, in a year or two there might be more solid grounds for complaint as to the construction of the houses and on account of the bad quality of timber supplied, with consequent warping, etc. He concluded that this would all tend to discredit the Company in the eyes of local authorities.<sup>10</sup>

The L.G.B. consequently wrote to the Admiralty,<sup>11</sup> and received a reply, dated February 8th 1919, stating that subject to Treasury sanction, it was proposed that a further 500 houses should be built. Such work, however, was not to be proceeded with until all the houses already built were let. The Admiralty considered that this scheme should include the provision of a number of shops.

It was pointed out that the funds voted under the 1914 Housing Act were nearly exhausted, the Admiralty therefore enquired as to what financial arrangements the L.G.B.S. would propose to enable the work to be carried out.<sup>12</sup>

As has been shown previously, the Rosyth Ratepayers Association had protested strongly against the houses built by the Company. The Admiralty's letter explained that the Association wished to submit plans of houses which they thought would be suitable to the workmen. The Admiral Superintendent at Rosyth had been requested to ask the Association for their proposals, and to forward them to the L.G.B.S.<sup>13</sup>

During February 1919, it was suggested that some of the plans from the L.G.B.S.'s architectural competition could be used for a certain number of the additional houses at Rosyth. On February 18th, David Deas, the Secretary of the S.N.H.Co.Ltd., wrote to the Secretary of the L.G.B.S., to ask if facilities could be arranged for the Company to examine the plans of cottages and tenements submitted in the competition.<sup>14</sup> The aims of the Board's competition will be dealt with in the next chapter.

An L.G.B.S. minute, dated April 15th 1919, and initialled J.D.M., recorded that Mottram had been instructed to select the most suitable premiated designs from the Competition, and to negotiate with the architects concerned as to the terms upon which the plans could be used.<sup>15</sup>

Regarding the alternative plans prepared by the Rosyth Ratepayers Association, the Secretary of H.M. Dockyard, Rosyth, wrote to the L.G.B.S. on February 24th 1919, enclosing six plans and an explanatory letter from the Association, in connection with the proposed 500 houses.<sup>16</sup> The enclosed letter from the Honorary Secretary of the Association explained that the plans were considered the most suitable for the workmen who had to live in them, and embodied all the features which had been found to enhance the comfort and easy working of the houses, while not materially adding to their total cost. It was pointed out that:

"All plans submitted have been prepared with a view to complying with the latest report and recommendations of the 'Women's House Planning Committee' as to sizes of apartments, sufficient scullery accommodation, and the omission of sloping ceilings, and according to later reports issued by the Committee of the L.G.B."<sup>17</sup>

On February 26th, the member of the Association who had designed the plans wrote to the Secretary of the Admiralty, London, enclosing one design which could be built in pairs or in blocks of four, six or more houses.<sup>18</sup> The front elevations could be varied, smaller frontages and depth could be adjusted, also the house could be planned in three different types. He



mentioned that the houses were similar to those at Chatham, Portsmouth, and Devonport, and conformed to L.G.B. byelaws. It was added that the site at Rosyth should be well land drained to avoid dampness, a problem much complained of in the existing houses.<sup>19</sup>

The Housing Company wished to start making preparations for the 500 houses, thus on April 5th 1919, Deas wrote to the Secretary of the L.G.B.S., asking if he could inform the Company definitely as to the numbers of the different kinds of houses required.<sup>20</sup> Deas added that it had been suggested to include in the 500 houses the 40 sub-ordinate officers' houses (Type S), the plans of which had already been approved; also that a further 20 or 30 houses might have a room on the ground floor which could be made as either a parlour or a bedroom, as found convenient by the tenant, similarly to the second intermediate house of type EE.

On April 24th, A.M. McKinna, the Housing Secretary of the L.G.B.S., informed the Secretary of the Admiralty that the houses comprising the first three developments at Rosyth had been completed. McKinna enquired whether the Admiralty desired that the preparation for the 500 houses should be proceeded with.<sup>21</sup>

No definite reply had been received by June 1919, therefore Deas wrote to the Secretary of the Civil Lord of the Admiralty on June 7th, explaining certain financial problems arising with the new scheme.<sup>22</sup> Firstly, it was desirable to obtain an amendment of the 1914 Housing Act so as to bring up to the present value the pre-war provision for the erection of houses, and that the Company should complete the original scheme in accordance with the existing agreement with the L.G.B.S. Secondly, Deas pointed out, apart from the difficulty of treating the proposed additional 500 houses on a different basis to the previous 1600 houses, it would not be possible for the Company to proceed under the new Housing Act, [The Housing, Town Planning, etc (Scotland) Act, 1919] even with a subsidy of 15% in addition to the 30% provided under the Act.<sup>23</sup>

Deas stressed that any delay caused by the need for an amending Bill would be minimised if preparations were allowed to proceed in the meantime. An immediate decision was therefore required as to the 40 sub-ordinate officers' houses and as to the number of parlour houses to be provided. He added that the Rosyth Ratepayers Association desired that 2/3 of the 500 houses should have parlours. The Company had already recommended that 20-30 houses, in addition to the 40 sub-ordinate officers' houses, should contain parlours. Should the full 3000 houses be built, Deas stated that some adjoining land should be acquired, the portion of the Company's land west of Grange Road having been found unsuitable as a building site.<sup>24</sup>

No definite answer had been given to Deas' questions by October 1919, the proposed 500 houses still being under negotiation between the Treasury and the Admiralty.<sup>25</sup>

The Admiralty had evidently suggested a stronger emphasis on economy in the 500 houses, a suggestion which the Housing Company found quite unacceptable. On December 24th 1919, Deas informed E.J. Graham, the Secretary to the Civil Lord of the Admiralty that:

"We think also that while the Civil Lord did refer to the minimum cost at which tenantable houses of the simplest character could be erected, it was not proposed as possible to design the next lot of houses on any more simple and economical lines than the previous ones. If that should be attempted there would assuredly be adverse criticism and trouble."<sup>26</sup>

#### Developments during 1920.

On February 11th 1920, W. Nicholson of the Admiralty wrote to Deas, giving details of the financial conditions for the proposed houses. The Treasury apparently did not feel justified in sanctioning the continuance of the present arrangement whereby the Company was guaranteed a 5% dividend.<sup>27</sup>

Nicholson explained that the Treasury was, however, prepared to sanction financial assistance to the Company, the amount of which was to be determined after an architect, appointed by the Treasury, had ascertained whether the Company's estimates of cost and management for the new houses could be reduced, as the assistance would not extend beyond the absolute minimum. The assistance was to be calculated upon the following lines: that the Company would take advantage of the general provision made by the Housing Act; that the Admiralty would make a grant to the Company of 20% of the capital expenditure on the additional houses; and that the Admiralty would make recurrent grants to equal the deficit between the Company's annual expenditure (allowing for 4% interest on called up share capital) and the rents or other income likely to be obtained.<sup>28</sup>

Provided the Company agreed to the above terms, the Admiralty hoped that the Company would invite tenders for the 500 houses, these consisting of 40 houses for sub-ordinate officers, 200 houses with parlours, and 260 houses without parlours.

With regard to the 40 houses, the sub-ordinate officers had asked that larger houses than the proposed Type S should be built, and that they should be situated on the southern slope of land around Rosyth Halt railway station. The Admiralty, however, had decided that the accommodation proposed by the Company should be adhered to, and that the houses should be built on the land held by the Company.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, Nicholson enclosed a copy of a memorandum by the sub-ordinate officers, giving particulars of their requirements. The Admiralty agreed that the requirements concerning the furnishings should be met as far as possible. With regard to the plan prepared by the representative of the Rosyth Ratepayers Association, as referred to earlier, the Admiralty again desired that these requirements should be met as far as may be reasonable.<sup>30</sup>

The sub-ordinate officers' memorandum, dated February 2nd 1919, listed the following minimum requirements: For the ground floor, a drawing room measuring 13' x 13'; a dining room measuring 14' x 14' (or equivalent area provided that the rooms were not unduly narrow); an entrance hall 4'6" wide; stairs 3'6" wide; a combined kitchen and scullery of 12' x 10'; a wash-house with a boiler and fire for boiling clothes, this being 10' x 8'; a coal store accessible from the scullery and the garden, capable of holding at least four tons of coal; a pantry near the kitchen; and a w.c. with an entrance from the garden.

The first floor was to include three bedrooms, the smallest of which was to measure no less than 12' x 10', and at least two of which should be large enough to accommodate an ordinary suite of bedroom furniture. A bathroom measuring 10' x 6'6", fitted with a full size bath and washbasin with hot and cold water supply and w.c. was also to be included.

A list of general requirements followed, the first being that the pitch of rooms be no less than 9' on the ground floor, and no less than 8'6" on the first floor, clear of all cooms, coves or roof cuttings. The memorandum stressed:

"Emphasis is laid on the point that the 8'6" pitch is required on all four walls of each bedroom, bathroom and lobby of the first floor, strong exception being taken to the manner in which the roof was cut into the bedroom space of existing houses."<sup>3</sup>

The officers also requested that some larger houses be erected containing four bedrooms and a bathroom, with the kitchen separate from the scullery, so as to provide for the needs of larger families. These houses were also to fulfil the above minimum dimensions.

Among other requirements, it was pointed out that where practicable, windows should be of a casement style, and should always be designed to prevent rain coming in between the upper and lower sash and between the lower sash and the window sill during ordinary rain storms. It was added

that much inconvenience had been experienced in existing houses owing to the poor nature of the sashes fitted.

Further requirements were that all hearths were to be tiled; that reasonably ornate mantels should be fitted to the fireplaces, in place of the "unsightly cast-iron type fitted in the latest type of house erected".<sup>32</sup> Electric lighting was to be fitted throughout, light being fitted in the hall and lobby. The gas cooker in the scullery should be efficiently vented to the open air by a flue, as:

"Gas cookers in all existing houses vent into the scullery and vitiate the air of the whole house."<sup>33</sup>

These points may have been borne in mind during the design of the new houses, however, it seems that the earlier proposal to adopt certain house types from the premiated designs of the architectural competition, must have been abandoned. On March 8th 1920, Mottram wrote to George MacNiven of the S.B.H., concerning the fourth development at Rosyth.<sup>34</sup> He enclosed plans of road sections, three layout plans and two type plans. 40 subordinate officers' houses and 16 parlour houses were to go on the Fitreavie land, the remaining 500 houses were said to be shown on the plan, with the exception of 34 parlour houses which could not be accommodated, but which might alternatively be built west of Brankholm Lane, facing Admiralty Road. Mottram added that more parlour houses could be provided around the pond and on the Admiralty Road sites, if the houses were built in blocks of four.<sup>35</sup>

On March 13th, MacNiven replied to Mottram, giving general approval of the revised sketch plan of Type S. Certain alterations were recommended, however, these being that a deeper oriel window should be provided in the living room, and that the projecting flat oriel in the large bedroom should be omitted. The depth of the linen cupboard was to be reduced so as to

improve the width of the bathroom. The projecting chimney stack at the gable was to be omitted, and roughcast was to be substituted.<sup>36</sup>

The plan of the parlour type was also generally approved, with the exception of some minor alterations suggested. MacNiven returned the plans so that Mottram could complete them for formal submission to the Board.<sup>37</sup>

On May 1st 1920, V.W. Baddeley of the Admiralty informed the Secretary of the S.B.H. that Mr. Ryle, the principal architect of the Office of Works, had had an interview at the Admiralty, at which he suggested that as flatted houses were cheaper to construct, a greater number of this type should be provided than proposed by the S.N.H.Co.Ltd.<sup>38</sup> The Admiral Superintendent, J.F.E. Green, had, however, decided that it was undesirable for any considerable number of flatted houses to be built provided that similar accommodation could be afforded in two-storey houses without any substantial increase in rent.<sup>39</sup>

Green suggested that 40 or so of the parlour houses should be of Type A, as many men would take a larger house with a view to letting rooms, however, as Type A was the most expensive type of house, the Admiralty disagreed with this suggestion.<sup>40</sup> With regard to the non-parlour houses, Green mentioned that, at that time, the three-bedroom types O and F seemed to be the most popular. He also observed that there were few two-bedroom houses, and that a further 100 of these would by no means be excessive.<sup>41</sup>

Further problems arose with the Treasury regarding the proposed scheme. A letter from the Treasury to the Admiralty dated May 22nd 1920, stated that the Treasury was not prepared to approve the scheme put forward by the Company for 472 additional houses.<sup>42</sup> In order that operations should not be delayed, the Treasury agreed to sanction the construction of 58 houses on the Pitreavie Estate, and to assist the Company by extending the present agreements to cover the houses as funding was still available under the Housing Act, 1914.

With regard to the 58 houses, however, the Treasury was unable to approve the standard of accommodation, and as a condition of the above arrangements, they stipulated that the standard should be reduced, in accordance with a report by Ryle, to involve a saving of £9000.<sup>43</sup>

The Admiralty nevertheless still required the 500 houses, and by November 1920, the Company had prepared a scheme for 40 houses for subordinate officers and 18 parlour houses on the Pitreavie site, 46 parlour houses to be built in conjunction with shops on King's Road; the remainder of the houses to be built on the Company's land to the west of King's Road.<sup>44</sup> Ryle prepared a report on the above scheme, approving of the 58 houses at Pitreavie being proceeded with. Ryle suggested that it should be considered whether it was desirable to proceed with the King's Road houses meantime; and suggested that the site for the remaining houses should be abandoned, and more suitable land acquired elsewhere.<sup>45</sup>

With regard to the remaining houses, Ryle pointed out that while the average density of houses in the previous developments was 12.6 to the acre, the density in this development would be considerably lower, due to the greater proportion of parlour houses, the increased standards of accommodation entailing a loss of frontage, the larger proportion of roads over 40 feet wide, and difficulties arising from the layout of roads and the configuration of the ground. The last two points were of the most importance, having a strong bearing on the cost of the development. Ryle suggested the acquisition of a different site with a view to keeping the expenditure to a minimum.<sup>46</sup>

The need for further housing at Rosyth was made clear to the Treasury in a letter dated February 12th 1921, from V.W. Baddeley of the Admiralty.<sup>47</sup> The letter referred to the fact that the S.B.H. were advising the Cabinet of the desirability of carrying out considerable schemes of concrete houses in Scotland. With regard to Rosyth, Baddeley explained:

"As Their Lordships of the Treasury are aware, the need for the provision of the remaining 1400 houses required for Admiralty workmen at Rosyth is one of the most urgent character, and the proposals the S.B.H. have in view, if approved, seem to My Lords to afford a means of meeting Admiralty needs at an earlier date than if the houses were brick built."<sup>48</sup>

Baddeley requested the Treasury's sanction for a further 1500 (rather than 1400) houses, and concluded by mentioning the housing difficulties in Edinburgh owing to the shortage of accommodation at Rosyth.

Evidently having received a favourable reply, Baddeley again wrote to the Treasury a week later, stating that the Admiralty was glad to learn that the Treasury wished the Company to continue in existence for its original purpose, and that the remainder of the houses were to be built. Sanction had been given for the 58 houses at Pitreavie and 46 houses on King's Road, a new site to be obtained for the remaining houses.<sup>49</sup>

#### Progress during 1922-23.

At the 7th Annual General Meeting of Shareholders, held on December 22nd 1922, the Chairman of the S.N.H.Co.Ltd., Sir John Findlay, gave a speech in which he explained that the position and prospects of the Company had been materially altered during the previous year.<sup>50</sup> Land had been feued for the remaining 1400 houses, however, during January 1921, it had been announced that the Dockyard staff was to be considerably reduced. In March, the Company received instructions that no more houses were to be built, apart from a certain number of sub-ordinate officers' houses, the negotiations and plans for which had lasted for some years. These houses were then subject to much delay, as were 15 shops with eight houses over them, the position in regard to which was still unclear.<sup>51</sup>

Findlay pointed out that in March 1922, a definite decision was reached, involving the disposal of all vacant ground belonging to the Company. He remarked:



"It was suggested that the Government were determined to wash their hands of the obligation in regard to housing they undertook when they decided to build a dockyard at Rosyth and left too long unfulfilled."<sup>52</sup>

Findlay further observed that, similarly to some previous decisions in connection with Rosyth, the decision of the authorities to provide no additional houses demonstrated a lack of knowledge and imagination. A considerable number of the employees were still living in the temporary buildings known as "Tin Town", and others occupied houses in neighbouring towns. The huts at Tin Town were unsatisfactory and insanitary, and were gradually falling into decay. A further 300 houses would be necessary to lodge the occupants of the huts, this matter was still under consideration.<sup>53</sup>

During 1922, the constructional work of the Company had been confined to completing 60 parlour houses, (Types X and Y) and various roads. Findlay commented that the 60 houses were an excellent job and had been most economically built.<sup>54</sup>

The following year, at the 8th A.G.M. of shareholders, held on December 21st 1923, Findlay reported that considerable progress had been made with the construction of the 40 houses for sub-ordinate officers.<sup>55</sup> The Admiralty had given no further indication as to their intentions in regard to Rosyth, and no conclusion had been reached regarding the future of the Company. Findlay again stressed the necessity for around 300 houses of a smaller size to take the place of the huts at "Tin Town". The continual occupation of these huts was, he continued:

"a breach of the understanding with Dunfermline in regard to the housing of those employed at the Dockyard, and an evasion or postponement of the obligations undertaken by the Admiralty in this respect."<sup>56</sup>

So as to bring the matter to a point, the Company had submitted to the Admiralty plans for a two roomed house with scullery, which could be built at an estimated cost of under £300 each, and let at around 6/- per week.<sup>51</sup>

At the A.G.M. held on December 24th 1924, Findlay reported that the 40 sub-ordinate officers' houses had been completed in May that year, and that there was some prospect that the Company would be asked to build 50 houses to take the place of the huts at Tin Town.<sup>52</sup>

The designs for Types X and Y and the sub-ordinate officers' houses.

Mottram's plan for Type X was dated April 16th 1920. Designed as a semi-detached house, the front elevation featured a low hipped roof broken by a central double gable, in contrast to the far more austere back elevation. The ground floor contained a living room, parlour and scullery, with three bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor.

Type Y, again a semi-detached house, contained similar internal accommodation to the above type. The front elevation was characterised by two small pointed gables extending through the roof above the two central first floor windows. The back elevation was of a curious design, with what appears to be a narrow horizontal section of roofing breaking through the main part of the roof directly above the first floor windows.

Two types of sub-ordinate officers' houses were designed, Types S1 and S2. The plan for Type S1 was dated April 24th 1920, also July 1922; that of Type S2 was dated January 31st 1923. Both types were of a very similar design, highly straightforward, with no dormers or gables. On the other hand, both designs contained parlours with bay windows, the provision of such windows being a rare feature at Rosyth.

Both types contained a living-room, parlour and scullery on the ground floor, with three bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor. As regards

the sub-ordinate officers' requests, the dimensions of the rooms were somewhat less than those recommended in the officers' memorandum.

Footnotes.

1. L.G.B.S. House Planning in Scotland. Report of the Women's House-Planning Committee, appointed by the President of the L.G.B. for Scotland. H.M.S.O. 1918.
2. Ibid. p.4.
3. The Mail for Leven, Wemyss and East Fife, September 17th 1919.
4. The Scottish Board of Health replaced the Local Government Board for Scotland under the Scottish Board of Health Act, 1919, (9 and 10 Geo V, ch 20.) June 3rd, 1919.
5. The Mail, op.cit.
6. Idem.
7. Dunfermline Press, September 13th 1919, p.5.
8. SRO/DD6 1155. L.G.B.S. minute dated January 16th 1919.
9. Idem.
10. Idem.
11. SRO/DD6 1155, letter from L.G.B. to the Admiralty, January 17th 1919.
12. Ibid. Admiralty to L.G.B., February 8th 1919.
13. Idem.
14. SRO/DD6 1155.
15. Ibid. L.G.B.S. minute.
16. SRO/DD6 1155.
17. Ibid. letter from J.L. Mavor, Honorary Secretary, Rosyth Ratepayers Association, to the Admiral Superintendent, Rosyth, February 24th 1919.
18. SRO/DD6 1155.
19. Idem.
20. Idem.
21. Idem.
22. Idem.
23. Idem.
24. Idem.
25. SRO/DD6 1155, Deas to Secretary of the S.B.H., Oct 10th, 1919, also McKinna to Deas, Oct 24th 1919.

26. SRO/DD6 1155, Deas to E.J. Graham, Dec 24th, 1919.
27. SRO/DD6 1155.
28. Idem.
29. Idem.
30. Idem.
31. Housing of Sub-Ordinate officers at Rosyth. Essential details.  
Memorandum dated Feb 2nd 1919. SRO/DD6 1155.
32. Idem.
33. Idem.
34. SRO/DD6 1155, Mottram to MacNiven, March 8th 1920.
35. Idem.
36. SRO/DD6 1155, MacNiven to Mottram, March 13th 1920.
37. Idem.
38. SRO/DD6 1155.
39. Ibid. J.F.E. Green, Admiral Superintendent, to the Secretary of the Admiralty, April 12th 1920.
40. Ibid. V.W. Baddeley to the Secretary, S.B.H., May 1st 1920.
41. Ibid. Green to Secretary of the Admiralty, April 12th 1920.
42. SRO/DD6 1155.
43. Idem.
44. SRO/DD6 456, SBH memorandum, Nov 13th 1920, referring to report by Ryle.
45. Idem.
46. Idem.
47. SRO/DD6 1155.
48. Idem.
49. Ibid. Baddeley to the Secretary of the Treasury, Feb 19th 1921.
50. SRO/DD6 1158.
51. Idem.
52. Idem.
53. Idem.
54. Idem.

55. SRO/DD6 1158.

56. Idem.

57. Idem.

58. SRO/DD6 1158, 9th A.G.M. of shareholders of the S.N.H.Co.Ltd., Dec 1924.

## Chapter 10.

### Legislation and Designs for State-Aided Housing, c.1919.

"While the housing of the working classes has always been a question of the greatest social importance, never has it been so important as now. It is not too much to say that an adequate solution of the housing question is the foundation of all social progress. Health and housing are indissolubly connected. If this country is to be the country which we desire to see it become, a great offensive must be undertaken against disease and crime, and the first point at which the attack must be delivered is the unhealthy, ugly, overcrowded house in the mean street, which we all of us know too well.

...If 'unrest' is to be converted into contentment, the provision of good houses may prove one of the most potent agents in that conversion."

H.M. George V at Buckingham Palace,  
April 11th, 1919.'

The Garden City Movement had brought to the public's attention the severity of the housing crisis and the need for reform; however, during the years preceding the First World War, the building trade declined, the war itself further worsening the problem. By the end of the war, Britain's housing shortage had reached extreme proportions, playing a large part in the growing unrest and discontent referred to above. In this chapter we will briefly look at the housing problems, particularly in Scotland where the standard of housing was far lower than in England and Wales; the work of various committees regarding the design of state-assisted housing; finally the legislation passed between 1919 and 1923, dealing with the provision of suitable houses.

### The Royal Commission on Housing in Scotland.

The conditions of working class housing in England and Wales were certainly in need of improvement, however, in Scotland, the problem was far more serious. As a result of growing discontent throughout large industrial (especially mining) areas, spreading also through rural districts, the

Royal Commission on Housing in Scotland was appointed in 1912.<sup>2</sup> The results of the Commission's survey were published in 1917, constituting a thorough investigation of the Scottish housing problem, with many recommendations for its improvement. The Commission's findings included:

"unsatisfactory sites of houses and villages, insufficient supplies of water, unsatisfactory provision for drainage, grossly inadequate provision for the removal of refuse, widespread absence of decent sanitary conveniences,... gross overcrowding and huddling of the sexes together in the congested industrial villages and towns, occupation of one room houses by large families, groups of lightless and unventilated houses in the older burghs, [and] clotted masses of slums in the great cities."<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, in 1911, 12.8% of Scottish houses had only one room, 40.4% two rooms, 20.3% three, and only 26.5% had more than three rooms. 73% of Scotland's population therefore lived in houses of three rooms or less, 47.7% living in one or two rooms. In the same year, 3.2% of the houses in England and Wales consisted of one room, 8.3% with two rooms, only 7.1% of the population living in such houses, the vast majority of the houses, 73.8%, containing four or more rooms.<sup>4</sup>

Since private enterprise had ceased to provide an adequate supply of houses, and was unlikely to do so in the immediate future, the Commission believed that there was no alternative to the State assuming the responsibility for building the necessary houses through the public authorities.<sup>5</sup> It had been calculated that a total of 235,990 houses should be provided before the housing conditions in Scotland could be regarded as satisfactory, 121,430 of these houses being immediately necessary to relieve existing overcrowding and to replace houses which were unfit for habitation.<sup>6</sup>

Among their recommendations, the Commission listed certain maximum densities for different types of housing, stressing that these, among other points, should be embodied without delay in an Act of Parliament. A maximum of 32 houses to the acre was recommended for three storey tenements; 24 to



the acre for double flatted houses, and no more than 16 single cottages to the acre."

When the new houses were to be built, the Commission believed that the minimum standard of accommodation should comprise a living room; two bedrooms; a scullery with a sink, tub and washing boiler; a larder and coal cellar; also, where water supplies were available, a w.c. and power to the local authorities to require the provision of a bath, with a domestic hot water supply.<sup>6</sup>

A separate section of the Commission's report, also published in 1917, was compiled by John Wilson, the Architectural Inspector of the L.G.B.S. Wilson's report was issued separately, as the Commission considered that it would be of assistance to local authorities and to others preparing post-war housing schemes.<sup>7</sup> The report included twelve type plans of houses for both urban and rural districts, and made various recommendations as to the internal planning.

The living room was to be of primary importance, a south or south-east aspect being recommended to ensure maximum sunlight. Further points were that it would not be necessary to provide a range in the scullery, as in England, the practice in Scotland being for cooking to be done in the living room; also the bathroom should be a separate apartment entered from the scullery.<sup>8</sup> Parlours were only to be included in houses of two or more bedrooms, and could be well dispensed with for reasons of economy.<sup>9</sup>

#### Later reports on housing.

In May 1918, the First Interim Report of the Ministry of Reconstruction Women's Housing Sub-Committee was published.<sup>10</sup> The Sub-Committee had been appointed to visit houses erected by the Ministry of Munitions, in addition to certain other houses, in order to make suggestions as to house planning, with special reference to the convenience of the house-wife.

A major recommendation of the report was that the total superficial area of the house should be increased beyond generally accepted standards, the advantages of a wide frontage being emphasised for additional air, light and sunshine. The Sub-Committee regarded as essential the provision of a minimum accommodation of a living room, parlour, scullery and three bedrooms per house, plus a larder and bathroom.<sup>13</sup> A parlour was recommended, as it had been found that where this was lacking, there was a tendency for the scullery to be used as a living room, the living room being kept as a parlour.<sup>14</sup> It was taken for granted that a garden should be attached to each house; the limitation of twelve houses per acre, to allow for extra space, also being welcomed.<sup>15</sup>

In October of that year, the Tudor Walters Report was published.<sup>16</sup> W. Hayes Fisher, the President of the L.G.B., had appointed the Committee, of which Unwin was a member, on July 26th 1917, to report upon methods of building construction in connection with the provision of dwellings for the working classes in England and Wales, also methods of securing economy and despatch in the provision of such dwellings. On April 20th, 1918, after consultation with the Secretary for Scotland, the terms of reference were altered, to include Scotland.

In the introduction to the report, the replies to an L.G.B. circular were summarised. It was estimated that 300,000 houses were needed in England and Wales; 109,000 in Scotland. A further 200,000 houses throughout Great Britain were required in order to slightly raise the standard of housing. A moderate total estimate was therefore 500,000 houses, this being in addition to the ordinary demand of 100,000 houses per year to replace demolished houses and to meet general requirements. The local authorities in England and Wales were willing to prepare schemes, subject to financial assistance, for around 150,000 houses; the Scottish local authorities, 98,540 houses.<sup>17</sup>

It was pointed out that the acute shortage of materials, especially timber, was a further problem affecting the provision of housing. The brickworks had ceased production, frequently being used for Government storage, also other materials had been diverted into war activities.<sup>18</sup> Despite the problems involved, it was hoped that an enlightened policy would be pursued, whereby:

"we may have in the future, instead of gloomy streets and squalid dwellings, spacious suburbs with convenient and attractive houses designed by competent architects."<sup>19</sup>

Many of the report's recommendations show strongly the influence of Unwin, especially in the emphasis that even with due economy, it was possible to develop beauty of vista, arrangement and proportion in the planning of roads and the disposition of buildings. Attractiveness could thereby be added at little or no extra cost, and was regarded as essential to true economy.<sup>20</sup> It was suggested that houses on short roads should be grouped around three sides of a quadrangle, or fronting onto short pathways at right angles to the road, the houses always being well set back from main roads.<sup>21</sup>

The importance of allowing plenty of sunshine into the rooms was stressed, illustrated by diagrams showing the height of the sun at noon during different times of year, upon which were based suitable distances between houses to allow for maximum sunlight.<sup>22</sup>

Again similar to Unwin's earlier writings, the report emphasised that back roads should be avoided. In the case of groups of houses, an open archway through the group could be provided for access to the back gardens.<sup>23</sup>

With regard to the internal planning of the houses, one point strongly contrasted with Unwin's earlier theories, this was the recommendation that wherever possible a parlour should be provided, all schemes to include a

large proportion of houses with parlours. Despite the provision of a large living room and a well equipped scullery, the desire for a parlour was found to be remarkably widespread.<sup>24</sup>

The report recommended three basic cottage types, to each of which a parlour could be added. It was unanimously agreed that no less than three bedrooms should be provided, a proportion of the houses having four bedrooms. The provision of two bedroom houses in Scotland, however, was regarded as a greater advance than that of three bedroom houses in England.<sup>25</sup>

With regard to the necessity for economy, it was pointed out that certain standardisation in details such as window panes, doors, also the elevation as a unit of a design, could help to give scale and breadth to groups of cottages. It was stressed however, that typical plans should be of limited use, and that care should be taken to avoid stereotyping.<sup>26</sup>

On January 17th 1919, the Final Report of the Women's Housing Sub-Committee was published.<sup>27</sup> The report welcomed the advance in standards as recommended by the Tudor Walters Committee, especially in regard to the recognition of the need for a large number of parlours, also of the necessity for eliminating cooking and other work from the living room.<sup>28</sup> The main recommendations of the Interim Report were reiterated, a further suggestion was the provision of social centres in housing schemes, this was seen to be the greatest step forward taken in the garden suburbs.<sup>29</sup>

On April 8th 1919, the L.G.B. published a Manual on the Preparation of State-Aided Housing Schemes.<sup>30</sup> The Manual basically summarised the major points of the Tudor Walters Report, including a collection of house types designed for the guidance of the local authorities. The plans, however, were extremely straightforward, sometimes austere, only one type (Class B4 urban, northerly aspect) having any variety in the facade. Indeed, the

Manual recommended that broken roofs and dormers should be avoided as far as possible.<sup>31</sup> It was again stressed, however, that the Board was particularly anxious to avoid monotony of treatment and the stereotyping of designs.

The following year, the Ministry of Health, having replaced the L.G.B., published a collection of type plans and elevations in connection with state-aided housing schemes.<sup>32</sup> This publication showed a stronger emphasis on standardisation than had previously been expressed. While pointing out that the plans were "by no means the last word in cottage planning", it was stated that a considerable amount of time had been saved by the adoption of type plans and quantities, and that it was hoped that:

"in the present period of extreme urgency a much more extended use will be made of them not only by local authorities, but by all bodies or persons embarking on building schemes."<sup>33</sup>

The majority of the enclosed type plans, in conformity with the great need for economy, were extremely plain and austere.

In connection with the design of state-aided houses, two competitions were organised. The first, which took place during 1917, was prepared by the R.I.B.A. and the L.G.B., who emphasised the need for strict economy.<sup>34</sup> The second, organised during 1919, was authorised by the L.G.B.S. and promoted by the Institute of Scottish Architects.<sup>35</sup> The aims of the competition were to establish a panel of architects from which local authorities could choose an architect to assist them in their housing schemes; also to prepare specimen plans of various house types, available for the guidance of local authorities.

### Housing Legislation, 1919-23.

The large-scale provision of suitable housing became one of the most important aspects of Reconstruction after the war, motivated at least partly by the growing industrial unrest. On the day following the Armistice, David Lloyd George announced a general election, pledging to provide "habitations fit for the heroes who have won the war."<sup>300</sup> The provision of housing of an improved standard was most likely seen as a means of securing a contented population; Mark Swenarton states that the housing programme of 1919 was accepted by Parliament as the necessary price for social stability and insurance against revolution.<sup>301</sup>

Consequently, on July 31st 1919, the Housing, Town Planning, etc. Act, known as the 'Addison Act', was passed. The Scottish equivalent, the Housing, Town Planning, etc (Scotland) Act, being passed on August 19th.<sup>302</sup> Both Acts for the first time made it the duty of local authorities to provide houses where necessary in their districts. Previously, local authorities only had power for such action. The authorities were to conduct, within three months, a survey of their districts' housing needs, and to submit plans for such dwellings to the Ministry of Health or the Scottish Board of Health. The financial liability of the local authorities in England and Wales was to be limited to the product of one penny in the pound on the rates; in Scotland, 4/5 of a penny in the pound; the remainder to be met by the Treasury.

Later in the same year, on December 23rd, the Housing (Additional Powers) Act was passed, applicable to England and Wales, also, with minor alterations, to Scotland.<sup>303</sup> The Act allowed houses built by private enterprise, yet conforming to certain building conditions, to be eligible for subsidy; and also made provisions to authorise the acquisition of land for the development of garden cities or town planning schemes.

On December 23rd 1920, the Housing (Scotland) Act was passed.<sup>40</sup> Under this Act, local authorities in Scotland were given power to hire compulsorily any suitable house which had been unoccupied for at least three months, for the purpose of providing housing accommodation. The S.B.H. was also given powers to prohibit or restrict building work of less importance than dwelling houses, which seemed likely to hinder the provision of housing. Such restriction of non-essential building, permitted under Section 5 of the Housing (Additional Powers) Act, however, ceased to have effect under the Housing Act of 1921, passed on July 1st, applicable to England and Wales.<sup>41</sup>

On August 4th 1921, the Housing (Scotland) Act 1921 was passed,<sup>42</sup> extending the period of time for obtaining grants for housing construction, from two years to either three years and six months, or two years and six months.

The Housing, etc. Act, 1923,<sup>43</sup> known as the Chamberlain Act, again enabled houses built by private enterprise, certified by the local authority as complying with certain standards of size and amenity, to qualify for a subsidy. In addition, local councils themselves were enabled to make a grant to private builders. The Act brought to an end the method of subsidising as under the Addison Act, which had proved to be unsuccessful, and provided for subsidies on an entirely different basis.<sup>44</sup>

It had been intended that 500,000 houses were to be built throughout Britain under the Addison Act, however, a number of problems including the high cost of building materials after the war, also shortages of labour and supplies, led to delays in the actual building of the houses. The housing programme was subsequently curtailed in 1921, whereupon Christopher Addison resigned as Minister of Health; however, houses were still being completed under the 1919 scheme by 1923. The 1919 legislation was responsible for the completion of 213,821 houses throughout Britain, 170,090 of which were

built by local authorities.<sup>48</sup> In later chapters we will see the effects of the 1919 housing acts in particular towns in Fife.



#### Footnotes.

1. Quoted in The Housing Question, by 'a former housing commissioner', London, 1922, p.5.
2. Report of the Royal Commission on the housing of the industrial population of Scotland. rural and urban, Cd.8731, London, 1917, H.M.S.O., p.292.
3. Ibid. p.346.
4. M. Bowley, Housing and the State 1919-1944, London, 1945, p.261.
5. Royal Commission, op.cit., p.300.
6. Ibid. p.9.
7. Ibid. p.71-2.
8. Ibid. p.309.
9. Royal Commission on Housing in Scotland. Special Report with relative specifications and plans, prepared by Mr. John Wilson F.R.I.B.A. Architectural Inspector of the L.G.B.S. on the design, construction and materials of various types of small dwelling-houses in Scotland. Cd.8760, Edinburgh, 1917, H.M.S.O.
10. Ibid. p.4.
11. Ibid. p.5.
12. Ministry of Reconstruction. Advisory Council. Women's Housing Sub-Committee. First Interim Report, Cd 9166, London, 1918, H.M.S.O.
13. Ibid. p.4.
14. Ibid. p.5.
15. Ibid. p.6-7.
16. Local Government Boards for England, Wales and Scotland. Report of the Committee appointed by the President of the L.G.B. and the Secretary for Scotland to consider questions of building construction in connection with the provision of dwellings for the working-classes in England and Wales, and Scotland, and report upon methods of securing economy and despatch in the provision of such dwellings. Cd 9191, London, 1918, H.M.S.O.  
Sir John Tudor Walters was the chairman of the committee.
17. Ibid. p.4.
18. Ibid. p.5.
19. Ibid. p.7.
20. Ibid. p.12.
21. Ibid. p.13.
22. Ibid. p.15.

23. Ibid. p.17.
24. Ibid. p.25.
25. Ibid. p.26-7.
26. Ibid. p.37.
27. Ministry of Reconstruction. Advisory Council. Women's Housing Sub-Committee. Final Report. Cd 9232, London, 1919, H.M.S.O.
28. Ibid. p.4.
29. Ibid. p.11.
30. Local Government Board, Manual on the Preparation of state-aided housing schemes. London, 1919, H.M.S.O.
31. Ibid. p.30.
32. Ministry of Health, Type plans and elevations of houses designed by the Ministry of Health in connection with state-aided housing schemes. London, 1920, H.M.S.O.
33. Ibid. preface.
34. M. Swenarton, Homes fit for heroes. The politics and architecture of early state housing in Britain. London, 1981. pp.90-91.
35. Housing of the Working Classes in Scotland. Selected plans and designs of the successful competitors in the architectural Competition authorised by the L.G.B.S. and promoted by the Institute of Scottish Architects. Edinburgh, 1919, H.M.S.O., p.3.
36. Swenarton, op.cit. p.79. Also, The Times, November 13th 1918.
37. Swenarton, op.cit. p.111.
38. Housing, Town Planning, etc Act, 1919, (9 and 10 Geo V) ch.35. July 31st, 1919.  
Housing, Town Planning, etc (Scotland) Act, 1919, (9 and 10 Geo V) ch.60. August 19th, 1919.
39. Housing (Additional Powers) Act, 1919, (9 and 10 Geo V) ch.99. December 23rd 1919.
40. Housing (Scotland) Act, 1920, (10 and 11 Geo V) ch. 71. December 23rd 1920.
41. Housing Act, 1921, (11 and 12 Geo V) ch. 19. July 1st, 1921.
42. Housing (Scotland) Act 1921, (11 and 12 Geo V) ch.33. August 4th, 1921.
43. Housing, etc. Act, 1923, (13 and 14 Geo V) ch.24. July 31st, 1923.
44. R.L. Reiss, The new housing handbook, London, 1924, p.25.
45. Laurence F. Orbach, Homes for Heroes. A study of the evolution of British Public Housing, 1915-1921, London, 1977, p.139.

## Chapter 11.

### Dunfermline's Housing Scheme, 1919.

In August 1917, the L.G.B., anticipating the need for a massive housing programme following the conclusion of the war, sent to all local authorities a circular concerning the provision of working class houses. On October 5th, 1917, the Housing Committee of Dunfermline Town Council considered the above circular and the enclosed schedule. In response to one of the questions in the schedule, the Committee replied that 1000 additional houses would be required in Dunfermline after the war, this being apart from the Rosyth development.<sup>1</sup>

The following year, a further circular from the Board, dated November 20th, 1918, was submitted to the above Committee. The Board urged that immediate steps should be taken in the preparation of a housing scheme. In answer to the Board's questions, the Committee replied that the Local Authority was prepared to provide any necessary houses for the working classes at an early date. As regards financial assistance, the Council requested further information from the L.G.B.S., and concurred with other Scottish local authorities in their contention that the whole loss upon housing schemes above the produce of a penny rate should be met by the Government as an Imperial War Charge. The Council submitted the case of Dunfermline as a special one in connection with the expenditure on Rosyth.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Town Council had not yet decided when the scheme would be ready for submission to the L.G.B., several schemes had been proposed for the provision of 200 to 1000 houses. It was thus expected that some form of development work could be undertaken immediately when demobilisation began, without waiting for the final approval of the house plans.

At the same meeting, a hint of the discontent regarding the housing shortage was given in a letter, dated November 11th, from the Secretary of

the Dunfermline Board of the Scottish Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers, containing the following resolution which had been passed at a general meeting:

"That this meeting of discharged sailors and soldiers view with grave apprehension the lack of housing accommodation for the working classes, and in view of the expected early demobilisation of the Navy and Army, urge the Council to immediately proceed with the Municipal Housing scheme suggested by the Government, to provide housing accommodation sufficient to meet the needs of the population of the town."³

The following month, on December 17th 1918, the Housing Committee resolved that the Council should indicate to the L.G.B.S. their willingness to provide 1000 houses for the working classes under the Government's scheme of financial assistance provided: (a) that the liability of the local authority for 25% of the deficit be definitely limited to the produce of 1d rate per annum; also that the liability of the Government for 75% of the deficit be correspondingly extended, so far as necessary, to meet the whole of the deficit in excess of the produce of a penny rate, not only throughout the seven years immediately post-war, but also over the period of loan after the valuation of the houses had taken place; (b) that the L.G.B. agreed to the 1000 houses being proceeded with by instalments over an appropriate period; (c) that the houses be of various types, minimum accommodation being a living room and two bedrooms, with bathroom, scullery and sanitary conveniences etc.; and (d) that the houses be erected in groups on several sites, according to the needs and facilities of each district in the Burgh.

Each member of the meeting had been furnished with a copy of the Tudor Walters Report, and of the report by the Women's Committee on Housing appointed by the L.G.B.S. Before further considering plans of houses and other details, the Committee agreed to await the result of the architectural competition recently inaugurated by the L.G.B. in connection with such housing schemes.

Following the submission of a resolution by Scottish local authorities to the L.G.B., urging the Government to review its financial terms for post-war housing, the L.G.B. circulated a letter dated February 12th 1919, to local authorities, containing revised financial proposals.<sup>4</sup> The letter stated that the Government had generally conceded the demand that the local authorities' liability be limited to a penny rate annually. Full housing schemes were to be submitted to the Board before February 12th 1920, and were to be carried out before February 1921, or within such further period as the Board might approve. Government aid would, within limits, be extended to re-housing in improvement and reconstruction schemes; local authorities would be required to bear the whole annual deficit on their housing scheme where such deficit did not exceed the penny rate. Among other stipulations, economy in house construction was stressed, also that the best rents obtainable were to be sought. Steps were to be taken for the standardisation of fittings and supply of building materials.

At a meeting of the Housing Committee, held on February 27th, 1919, a circular from the L.G.B.S. was read, communicating the results of their architectural competition and intimating arrangements for the exhibition of the competitive plans in Edinburgh. It was agreed that members of the Committee should visit the exhibition.

At the above meeting, the Committee resolved to recommend to the Town Council the Brucefield site of about 25½ acres for around 300 houses, offered in feu by Mr. Erskine Beveridge; at a feu duty of about £8 per acre, also the Townhill site on the Burgh lands at Townhill Wood.

The following month, it was resolved that subject to the approval of the L.G.B.S., the Town Council should distribute the architectural work of the proposed housing scheme among a number of Dunfermline architects.<sup>5</sup> The Town Clerk was instructed to invite the architects William Barbour, John Fraser, Robert Motion, Andrew (or James) Scobie, James Shearer, Stewart Kaye and Thomas Rutherford to submit plans and elevations of suitable

houses, on the understanding that submission of such plans would not necessarily mean that the Council would engage the preparer thereof on any part of the housing scheme.

The preparation of the house plans.

At a meeting of the Housing Committee, held on May 5th, 1919, it was reported that the layout plan of the Brucefield site, being prepared by Rutherford, would be completed as soon as possible following selection of the house types for the site. The following day, Shearer exhibited and explained to the above Committee his altered layout plans for the Townhill site, after which it was agreed that he should lodge the plans with the Town Clerk or Burgh Engineer, so as to be submitted to the L.G.B.S.

The Committee then examined the house plans submitted by the various architects, making a selection of a large number of plans, as follows:

3 apartment houses:	Rutherford's plans 1 and 1a; Motion's plans 2 and 2b.
,, ,, flatted type:	Rutherford's plan 3; Fraser's plan 4; Barbour's plan 5; Kaye's plan 6; Shearer's plan 7; Scobie's plan 8.
4 apartment houses:	Rutherford's plans 1, 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d; Fraser's plan 2; Barbour's plan 3; Scobie's plan 4; Kaye's plans 5 and 6; Shearer's plans 7 and 8.
5 apartment houses:	Rutherford's plans 1 and 2; Motion's plan 3; Fraser's plans 4 and 5; Barbour's plan 6; Scobie's plan 7. <sup>6</sup>

Various modifications in details were agreed to on the majority of the plans, the Burgh Engineer, Robert Morton, was instructed to arrange with the architects for these modifications to be effected.

The Burgh Engineer then submitted a report upon the Brucefield site, in which he explained that given a density of twelve houses to the acre, and allowing for a proportion of flatted cottages, the area (around 11½ acres) should accommodate 150 houses. The area referred to was evidently less than

half that intended for the whole site. Morton suggested that 30% or 45 houses should contain two bedrooms and a living room; 50% or 75 houses, three bedrooms and a living room; and 20% or 30 houses, a parlour, three bedrooms and living room. Of the three bedroom type, he suggested that a proportion of the houses should have one bedroom on the ground floor, to be used either as a parlour or as a bedroom. Regarding the two bedroom type, Morton suggested that half the houses should be flatted cottages.

Bailie Irvine and Councillor Husband commented that the proportion of houses with three bedrooms and a living room was excessive, however, the following allocations for the first development of 150 houses were agreed to, as follows: of the three apartment houses, 30 houses as designed by Rutherford and 15 by Motion were to be built; of the four apartment houses, 20 each from the plans by Kaye, Shearer and Barbour; also 15 by Rutherford; and of the five apartment houses, 16 by Fraser and 14 by Scobie.

These allocations were further discussed by the Town Council on May 12th, as reported by the Dunfermline Press.<sup>7</sup> Although the Provost, James Norval, explained that the above proportions were only for this particular part of the scheme, and that the completed scheme might show a totally different percentage, a fairly heated discussion ensued; Bailie Wilson contending that if the Dunfermline rate-payers were consulted, it would be found that nothing less than a four roomed house was wanted. Wilson explained that to confine a working man, especially a miner, to a living room and two bedrooms was out of the question, such accommodation leaving no room for the furniture, a piano for example. A miner required in his house a room specially set aside for drying his clothes, and as some members of the Committee objected to the provision of a fireplace in the scullery, the clothes would therefore have to be dried in the living room, thus proving that the accommodation was insufficient. The discussion continued:

"Baillie Kenny - Good Gracious!

Mr. Husband - Do you want to make provision for a piano in every miner's house?

Baillie Wilson - Yes. He has as much right to a piano as any other man. I want the miner to have a room that he can take you into."<sup>a</sup>

A Mr. Warburton argued that supporters of the amendment (to increase the number of three apartment houses) were attempting to keep the working classes down, a suggestion which was strongly denied. To demonstrate the demand for houses, he pointed out that when the Scottish National Housing Company had recently offered to let ten of their houses at Rosyth to outsiders:

"Dunfermline people simply fell over each other to get these houses."<sup>a</sup>  
The Provost finally gave his casting vote in favour of the proportions as originally recommended.

The following month, on June 18th, the Housing Sub-Committee considered a communication from the L.G.B.S., expressing the Board's approval to the building of 500 houses under the Government's financial provisions, to be completed within the extended time-limit. The Board would support an application for extension of the time-limit in this instance, provided due diligence was shown in the building scheme.

The Sub-Committee accordingly decided to recommend concentrating specifically on the Brucefield site, for which liability for feu-duty was being incurred, as there was a risk of the Council being unable to complete the whole scheme within the time available for a Government grant; whereas the Townhill site already belonged to the town.

The L.G.B. desired the housing accommodation to consist of 250 four room houses, 200 three room houses, and 50 five room houses. This was agreed to, as was the Board's further stipulation that none of the five room houses should be of the flatted type. The Board also recommended a reduction in the number of house types, four types being sufficient, a type each for three, four and five room houses, also a three room flatted house.



The Sub-Committee recommended that the Council should agree to these recommendations for the sake of expedition. The Board had found that plans by five of the architects were the most suitable, it was thus agreed that the Town Council had no alternative but to confine its choice of architects to the five chosen by the L.G.B.S., allocated as follows: Shearer was to be in charge of 100 houses at Townhill; Fraser, Rutherford and Motion were to be in charge of 100 each at Brucefield, also Scobie was allocated 50 houses at each site. The architects Kaye and Barbour were not to be engaged on the housing scheme.

On June 21st, John Wilson, the L.G.B.S.'s Architectural Inspector, wrote to the Council, recommending that only one measurer should be appointed:

"so that the method of construction and type of finishings can be kept uniform throughout the housing scheme."<sup>10</sup>

It was later arranged that the plans to be adopted were Motion's three room house, south aspect; Rutherford's three room house, north aspect; Shearer's plan to be prepared anew for a four room house, south aspect; Rutherford's four room house, north aspect; Scobie's five room house, south aspect; and a plan by Fraser for flatted houses.<sup>11</sup>

In each case, the plans had to be adjusted to conform with the Board's recommendations, however, the Housing Committee, meeting on June 23rd, insisted that in dealing with the L.G.B.S., the desirability of having a downstairs bathroom in a considerable proportion of houses should be emphasised, this being considered more suitable for a house occupied by a miner or a similar workman.<sup>12</sup>

The Scottish Board of Health, formerly the L.G.B.S., sent a communication, dated September 19th 1919, to the Council, requiring the formal submission of the outline housing scheme before November 19th, and explaining that the amount of the estimated annual loss to be borne by the local authority was now limited to the produce of a rate of 4/5 of a penny

in the pound; the scheme to be completed before August 19th 1922, or such later date as the Board might allow.<sup>13</sup>

On November 25th, 1919, at a meeting of the Housing and Town Planning Committee, it was confirmed that the housing scheme had been submitted in advance of the Board's required date, and that all the detailed type plans had been approved by the S.B.H. The Burgh Engineer reported his intention to ask the architects to go to Edinburgh to select fireplaces, etc., in conjunction with the Board's officials.

Dunfermline's Sanitary Inspector, William Kennedy, concluding his report for the year 1919, stated that throughout the year, progress in sanitary reform had been delayed through lack of housing. No houses had been built during the year, apart from those required for war purposes - presumably those at Rosyth. With regard to the future housing scheme, however, Kennedy appeared optimistic:

"The outlook for the future, however, is good. An early start will soon be made with the local authority's housing scheme. The houses when erected will have all the essentials necessary to the comforts of a home.

In the past we were content with the room and kitchen, with or without scullery, or at the most a three - apartment house. Today, nothing less than the latter is permitted, with all the other necessary conveniences which at one time only belonged to the better class of houses."<sup>14</sup>

Kennedy suggested that all existing houses, particularly those which had to be dealt with by the Department, should be altered so as to comply with the new standards, the resulting increase in rent being worthwhile.

#### Developments during 1920.

On February 16th, 1920, the S.B.H. wrote to Dunfermline Town Council, giving formal approval of type plans A to G inclusive, evidently having

approved an additional type prepared by Shearer for a four room house, south aspect, with a downstairs bathroom.<sup>15</sup>

On April 10th 1920, the Dunfermline Press reported a ceremony which had taken place at the Brucefield site, to cut the first piece of turf in connection with the road formation work.<sup>16</sup> The article stated that Bailie Irvine had given a brief history of the housing scheme, pointing out that:

"There had been a considerable amount of delay and a very great amount of trouble, and even yet the terms and conditions, especially in regard to finance ... had not been settled."

Provost James Norval was reported to have remarked that there was no doubt that the working classes were alive to the necessity of better accommodation, and that they intended to have it. Norval feared, however, that labour troubles and difficulties with regard to material might retard the completion of the scheme. He also observed that the present development at Brucefield was of only 178 of the 500 houses to be included in the whole scheme, before the subsidy period expired, and that:

"There was no reason whatever, with enthusiasm on the part of everyone concerned, why the houses should not be erected before that time."<sup>17</sup>

The question of raising money for the housing scheme was discussed on June 25th, by the Finance Committee.<sup>18</sup> It was decided to recommend the Town Council that early commencement be made with the issue of Local Bonds under the Housing (Additional Powers) Act, 1919, the bonds to be secured upon all the rates, property and revenues of the Local Authority, and were to bear interest at a rate fixed by the Treasury, currently 6%. The bonds were to be issued in denominations of £5, £10, £20, £50, £100 and multiples of £100; and were to be issued for periods of not less than five years. The Committee further advised the Town Council to pass a formal resolution to borrow £400,000 for the housing scheme expenditure, to advertise this

intention and to apply for the consent of the S.B.H. to this resolution. The Town Clerk reported that as at June 15th, the Council had borrowed £4525 by local bonds for three years at 6%, also £46,000 on a temporary loan at 5% interest.

Problems concerning the supply of bricks and bricklayers.

Dunfermline's housing scheme appeared to have been somewhat delayed by a shortage both of bricks, and of bricklayers. On August 26th 1920, the Housing and Town Planning Committee resolved to invite conferences with representatives of those responsible for the employment of bricklayers on other contracts in the town, also with the workmen's organisations.

Consequently, on September 16th, the above Committee met with Messrs. Strachan, Cooper and Soutar, representing the Operative Bricklayers Society, to discuss the supply of bricklayer labour for the Municipal housing scheme. After discussion, the Committee agreed to communicate with the S.B.H. regarding arrangements being made to ensure an adequate weekly wage to builders engaged on housing schemes, notwithstanding broken weather, and with a view to establishing local committees to decide as to the prohibition of non-essential buildings. The Town Clerk was also instructed to communicate with H.M. Office of Works, raising the question of ceasing operations on Dunfermline Palace Ruins, so far as this was taking up the time of two builders.<sup>19</sup>

On October 15th, Dunfermline's Dean of Guild, John McClelland, and the Burgh Engineer, Robert Morton, attended a meeting of representatives of local authorities in Glasgow. At the meeting, considering the general scarcity of materials, especially bricks and cement, a Committee was formed, including Provost Norval, to take up the matter with the Government. Norval later reported<sup>20</sup> that he had attended a meeting of this

Committee in Edinburgh on October 22nd, at which resolutions had been adopted as follows:

"(1) Urging the Government to take steps to control the production, distribution and prices of all materials required for building houses, and to take over or erect and work factories for production or assist the development of such factories as are not being fully utilised; (2) demanding extension from three years to five of the period for building for participation in State aid; and (3) requiring more drastic measures against luxury buildings, etc., and more liberty to local authorities in acquiring materials outwith the Director of Building Materials Supply Department."z'

Insofar as the shortage of bricks affected Dunfermline, on October 26th 1920, a letter was submitted to the Housing and Town Planning Committee from Messrs. Street and Co., on the subject of the difficulty in obtaining materials, particularly bricks, for their contract at Brucefield. The contractors mentioned that unless bricks could be obtained in greater numbers, they would have to discharge their workmen. The Burgh Engineer reported that he had arranged to obtain three loads of bricks the following day from Rosyth, and 20,000 bricks thereafter from the same source. Further arrangements to obtain bricks from other sources had been made. The Town Clerk was also instructed to communicate with those responsible for the theatre building operations in Dunfermline, and to insist upon their temporarily reducing their demand on the brick-works in the area, so as to make more bricks available for the housing scheme.

Probably due to the lack of bricks, the Council agreed to the use of concrete blocks in certain parts of the housing scheme. At the above meeting, following consideration of a report by the Burgh Engineer, the Committee instructed the Town Clerk and Burgh Engineer to submit full details of certain proposals for the approval of the S.B.H., one being that the Council should arrange for the manufacture of concrete blocks by the acquisition, if necessary, of three machines as a charge against the

housing scheme. Thereafter, the contracts for the first 20 houses at Townhill were to be let on a concrete block construction.

The state of the housing scheme by December 1920.

Despite the difficulties faced by the Council with regard to the building operations, reasonable progress had been made, as reported at some length by the Dunfermline Press on December 25th, 1920. The report stated:

"Despite the operation of manifold agencies which have contributed towards retarding the development of the Dunfermline municipal housing scheme at Brucefield, it must be admitted that real progress has been made. ... What may appropriately be described as a model town is being gradually brought into being. ... Of the 75 blocks, representing 164 houses ... a large proportion have reached an advanced stage of progress."

It was then reported that although the Council had expected three of the two-house blocks to be ready for occupation within the first week of the New Year, the abnormally damp atmospheric conditions had delayed the painters from starting work. It was hoped, however, that the finishing touches would be put to these six houses before the end of January. The houses themselves were then described:

"In view of criticisms which will doubtless be directed toward the houses, and of the comparisons which will inevitably be made between the buildings and the houses of the Scottish National Housing Company Limited at Rosyth, a brief description of the main features may not be out of place. It may be stated at once, that the suggestion of 'jerryiness' may be summarily dismissed. To what extent that allegation was justified in the case of the Rosyth houses, is not the purpose here to elucidate. The Brucefield houses, so far as the first half dozen in question are concerned, are most substantially built, amply commodious, and excellently equipped. On the ground floor of the smaller of the houses, there is a living room or kitchen, which ... will compare favourably with any kitchen in houses of the same size erected prior to the war. Underneath the staircase, there is a commodious cupboard. There is a roomy open press, and there is fitted one of the most up-to-date grates, with a large oven attachment. A large double window affords ample light to the kitchen. To the rear of the kitchen, there is a fine roomy scullery fitted with fixed in washtubs, sink, gas

boiler (which can be heated either by gas or coal), a hot water cylinder, double drying pulley, with large gas cooker. Adjoining the scullery is a roomy pantry, with window, and a coal cellar."<sup>23</sup>

The bedrooms were reached by a stairway, leading from the front door. The smaller of these, measuring 10' x 12½', had a large double window and was fitted with an artistic fire grate. The bathroom and w.c. were situated on the stair landing.

The five apartment house was then described, with similar praise:

"This is really a finely designed dwelling house, not only in respect of accommodation, but in the compactness which has been secured by the architect."<sup>24</sup>

In his Annual Report for 1920, William Kennedy, the Sanitary Inspector, remarked that the new houses were certainly providing an improvement, although unfortunately the rents required were outside the limit of many of the people residing in the houses under consideration.<sup>25</sup> Considering the question of providing more accommodation at affordable rents, he agreed that houses should not be built with less accommodation solely for the purpose of cheapening rents, especially as there were around 3,500 one and two apartment houses in the town, out of a total of 6172 houses of four apartments and under.

The Annual Report by the burgh's Medical Officer of Health, A.J. MacGregor, for 1920, also summarised the development of the housing scheme, stating that in 1919 the Council had estimated that 1000 houses should be erected, an estimate which had later been reduced to 500 for the sake of expediency. After repeating the above quoted statistics from Kennedy's report, MacGregor concluded:

"Better homes mean more contentment and less of the spirit of unrest that warps itself around the wheels of progress and delays the onward march."<sup>26</sup>

### Developments during 1921-22.

On February 3rd 1921, the contractors having started the road work for the Brucefield Second Development, the Housing and Town Planning Committee agreed to advertise within a month's time for offers for the work on these 158 houses.<sup>27</sup> As there was a possibility that the houses might not be completed by the expiry of the subsidy period in August 1922, the Town Clerk was instructed to communicate with the S.B.H. to obtain their approval to the contracts being entered into, and if possible, to be assured that the houses would still be included in the state-aided scheme. On March 9th, the Town Clerk referred to a letter from the S.B.H., dated March 3rd, stating that the question of extending the subsidy period was under consideration by the Government,<sup>28</sup> and suggesting that the local authority should consider whether, pending a decision, tenders should be accepted.

The Council evidently went ahead with the scheme, as the S.B.H., in a letter dated April 23rd, suggested that where a number of Type D houses were to be together in the second development at Brucefield, variety might be introduced by providing a gable for the two centre windows on the upper floor.<sup>29</sup> The Board, in the above letter, approved of the provision of an oriel window in certain blocks of Type E at the Brucefield first development; the Housing and Town Planning Committee accordingly instructed the Town Clerk to press for the Board's approval to such provision in the second development.<sup>30</sup>

The first development on the Townhill site was much later in starting than the Brucefield site, the plans for this site being approved by the Board in a letter dated January 28th 1921.<sup>31</sup> This development was to consist of 32 houses, and considering the possibility of an increasing scarcity of bricks, it was decided that the houses would be built of cement block construction.<sup>32</sup>



On April 28th, at a meeting of the Housing and Town Planning Committee, it was reported that the Secretary for Scotland had announced that the subsidy period would be extended in Scotland to August 1924.

On December 12th, 1921, Provost Norval informed the Town Council that a letter had been received that day from the S.B.H., indicating that they were prepared to authorise a further 30 houses for the Burgh, upon certain terms and conditions.<sup>33</sup>

The question of rents at Brucefield, which had been under discussion for many months, was finally settled in June 1922. On June 14th, the S.B.H. approved the following rents: For a three apartment cottage, £23; for a three apartment flatted house, £21, 10/-; for a four apartment cottage £26; and for a five apartment cottage, £31.<sup>34</sup> On August 25th, the S.B.H. approved a rent of £22 for the four apartment houses at Townhill.<sup>35</sup>

The housing shortage in the area remained a problem, however, as was shown by the Annual Report for 1922 by William Kennedy, the Sanitary Inspector. Kennedy estimated that there was a shortage of 225 houses in the Burgh, with 112 houses unfit for occupation. This estimate did not include Rosyth, partly because it was within the older part of Dunfermline that the greatest hardship of housing shortage was being experienced. Kennedy stated that this problem could only be dealt with adequately by the local authority, as there was no immediate evidence that private enterprise would provide any dwellings for the working classes, or at least in anything like adequate numbers, the greatest need at the time being to rehouse families living in unfit dwellings. Kennedy observed:

"With regard to the housing conditions generally, it would not be correct to say that there is no improvement. The fact that there are always a certain number of new houses let each month in the Brucefield housing scheme is bound to help somewhere. It would not, however, be correct to imagine that the numbers are anywhere adequate for the requirements of the population."<sup>36</sup>

The layout and the house types at the Brucefield site.

As has been shown, it was intended that the density of housing at the Brucefield site should be around twelve houses to the acre, thus conforming with Unwin's recommendation. In fact, the density appears to be somewhat lower than this estimate, approximating ten houses to the acre.

The estate was carefully planned, with curving roads and occasional quadrangles. Provision was made for trees and shrubs, and the streets were given added variety by the arrangement of the houses. Certain groups of houses were set well back from the road, with a house placed diagonally at either end of the group.

The houses themselves were of varied design, some fairly simplified, others featuring such elements as hipped roofs and gabled dormers. One of the smaller types, a semi-detached cottage, was of a design which appeared in a number of similar schemes, including Inverkeithing and Kirkcaldy. The cottage was characterised by a hipped roof and a patterned area of brickwork above each front door. One of the larger types was of a more straightforward design, but was the only type of house to include bay windows. Although the houses were predominantly roughcast, a certain degree of variety was added to many of the facades by the use of patterned brickwork, frequently surrounding the doors.

Footnotes.

1. Dunfermline Town Council Minutes, L.G.B. circular dated August 10th 1917, submitted to Housing Committee, Oct 5th 1917.
2. D.T.C.M., Housing Committee, November 27th 1918.
3. Idem.
4. D.T.C.M., Housing Committee, Feb 20th 1919.
5. D.T.C.M., Housing Committee, March 13th 1919.
6. D.T.C.M., Housing Committee, May 6th 1919.
7. Dunfermline Press May 17th 1919, p.3.
8. Idem.
9. Idem.
10. D.T.C.M., Housing Sub-Committee, June 23rd 1919.
11. Idem.
12. Idem. also Housing Committee, same date.
13. D.T.C.M., Housing Committee, Oct 22nd 1919.
14. Annual Report of the Sanitary Inspector, 1919, D.T.C.M.
15. D.T.C.M., Housing and Town Planning Committee, Feb 27th 1920. Shearer's additional plan was referred to at a meeting of the Housing Sub-Committee on June 23rd.
16. Dunfermline Press, April 10th 1920, p.3.
17. Idem.
18. D.T.C.M., Finance Committee, June 25th 1920.
19. D.T.C.M., Housing and Town Planning Committee, Sept 16th 1920.
20. D.T.C.M., Housing and Town Planning Committee, Oct 20th 1920.
21. Idem.
22. Dunfermline Press, Dec 25th 1920, p.7.
23. Idem.
24. Idem.
25. Annual Report of the Sanitary Inspector, 1920, D.T.C.M.
26. Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1920, D.T.C.M.
27. D.T.C.M., Housing and Town Planning Committee, Feb 3rd 1921, the number of houses was given on May 17th 1921, at the above Committee.

28. D.T.C.M., Housing and Town Planning Committee, March 9th 1921.
29. Ibid. April 28th 1921.
30. Idem.
31. D.T.C.M., Housing and Town Planning Committee, Feb 3rd 1921.
32. Ibid. March 9th 1921.
33. D.T.C.M., Town Council, Dec 12th 1921.
34. D.T.C.M., Housing and Town Planning Committee, June 29th 1922.
35. D.T.C.M., House Letting Committee, Sept 5th 1922.
36. Annual Report of the Sanitary Inspector 1922, D.T.C.M.

## Chapter 12.

### Inverkeithing's Housing Scheme.

On December 21st, 1911, Inverkeithing Town Council resolved to apply to the L.G.B.S. for authority to prepare a town planning scheme for the burgh, in terms of Part II of the Housing, Town Planning, etc, Act, 1909. The general object of the scheme was to secure proper sanitary conditions, amenity and convenience.' J.E. Wilkes, the town planner for Dunfermline and Rosyth, was later appointed to plan the area.<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of 1918, a municipal housing scheme was proposed. On December 4th, Inverkeithing's Town Planning Committee met the L.G.B.S.'s Housing Inspector, Ross Young, who explained the Government's intended financial arrangements for the provision of housing by local authorities. The Council agreed to prepare a scheme, subject to satisfactory financial arrangements being reached.<sup>3</sup>

The site for the housing scheme was decided upon on March 6th 1919. Having considered a report by the Burgh Surveyor, also a plan of the Spencerfield site, between Preston Crescent and Hillend Road to the west of the Aerodrome Railway; the Housing Sub-Committee visited the site and found it to be suitable for the housing scheme.<sup>4</sup>

The above Committee discussed the scheme with a Housing Inspector from the S.B.H., a Mr. Nicoll, on August 1st. Nicoll pointed out that the minimum accommodation which would be sanctioned was a living room and two bedrooms.<sup>5</sup> On September 29th, the Committee considered certain questions from the S.B.H., and subsequently instructed the Town Clerk to reply that the extent of ground would be 16 acres, with a density of 12 houses to the acre. 200 houses were to be completed by July 1922.<sup>6</sup>

The following month, on October 20th, the Town Council appointed the architects Williamson and Reid, from Inverkeithing, in order that the

preparation of layout and type plans could be proceeded with at the same time as the negotiations regarding the site.<sup>7</sup>

On November 14th, the Town Council resolved that the housing scheme should consist of 25 two-apartment houses, 100 three-apartment houses, and 75 four-apartment houses.<sup>8</sup> The proposal to build two-apartment houses certainly differed from the intentions of most local authorities in Fife.

At the above meeting, however, it was suggested that the proportions recommended by the S.B.H., as stated in a letter from Williamson and Reid, dated November 6th, should be followed. The Board had recommended that 50% of the houses should consist of four rooms, 40% of three rooms and 10% of five rooms.<sup>9</sup> The S.B.H. later informed the Council that two-apartment houses could not be sanctioned in connection with the housing scheme.<sup>10</sup> Certain members of the Council believed that the inclusion of such houses should be insisted upon, however it was finally agreed to acquiesce with the Board's ruling.<sup>11</sup>

A revised allocation of the houses was requested by the S.B.H. in February 1920; the Housing Sub-Committee thus recommended 100 three apartment houses, 80 four-apartment houses, and 20 houses of five or more apartments.<sup>12</sup>

A letter from the architects was submitted to the above Committee on March 4th, enclosing duplicate sets of four type plans, the drafts of which had been approved by the S.B.H.<sup>13</sup> Later in the month, the Housing Sub-Committee met Reid to discuss various points concerning the type plans.<sup>14</sup> It was resolved to suggest to the S.B.H. that 32 of the 100 three roomed houses should be of the flatted type. Regarding the accommodation, Reid was to ascertain the Board's views as to separate washing houses being provided for each house, either in outshots or detached, and whether, in the event of these being incorporated in the scheme, it would be permissible for them to be used in common by two or more tenants. The Board later informed the architects that separate washing houses had not been approved in any

scheme, a wash-tub and copper in each scullery being regarded as preferable.<sup>15</sup>

The following month, the Housing Sub-Committee received a letter from the S.B.H. suggesting that, in order to expedite matters, the local authority should concentrate upon a section of the layout plan which could be submitted at an early date. The Board urged the rapid completion of the necessary plans and schedules so that advantage could soon be taken of the weather to commence building operations.<sup>16</sup>

On April 27th, the Town Council, accompanied by Reid, visited the Spencerfield site to select the area where building should commence. This area was to be the north-west portion entering at the Bowling Green, where around 40 houses were to be built. It was also decided that the architects should concentrate on the following house types; pairs of three-roomed houses; blocks of four houses of four rooms; and three-roomed flatted houses in blocks of four.<sup>17</sup>

Letters were submitted to the Council on June 4th, giving the Board's approval of the type plans. It was further agreed that the architects should make provision for electric lighting, also for fitting pipes for cooking by gas.<sup>18</sup>

#### Developments during 1921-23.

Having approved the above 40 houses, the S.B.H. evidently refused to sanction the remaining 160 houses as originally planned. On November 8th 1921, it was proposed that the Council should urge the S.B.H. to reconsider its decision to curtail the housing scheme in order that roads and drains could be made, thus affording employment for unskilled labour.<sup>19</sup> It was also suggested that a deputation should be sent to the Board, to discuss the matter. On December 2nd, the Clerk submitted the Board's reply, dated

November 17th. The Board claimed to be aware of the existing housing conditions in the Burgh, and agreed to give full consideration to these conditions in the allocation of any further houses that they might be permitted by the Government to authorise. The Board therefore considered the Council's deputation to be unnecessary.<sup>20</sup>

Although no further houses had been sanctioned, a letter dated November 24th, gave the Board's approval to the acquisition of the entire Spencerfield site, as originally proposed.<sup>21</sup>

At the above meeting, the Town Clerk was instructed to inform the S.B.H. of the proposed rents, these being £22, 10/- for flatted houses of three rooms; £24 for self-contained houses of three rooms, and £29 for four-roomed houses.<sup>22</sup>

In January 1922, the S.B.H. suggested higher rents than the Council's recommendations. The Board's suggested rents were not listed in the Council minutes, however, it was agreed that such rents were excessive.<sup>23</sup> The Housing Sub-Committee later instructed the Clerk to protest against these increases, the local authority's recommended rents being the same as those sanctioned in adjoining districts.<sup>24</sup> The S.B.H. subsequently offered a reduction of £3 all round on their previous suggestions,<sup>25</sup> this was eventually accepted, although the Council still believed the rents to be excessive.<sup>26</sup>

With regard to the number of houses to be built, on December 19th 1921, a letter was submitted to the Housing Sub-Committee; informing the Council that the S.B.H. was prepared to allocate a further ten houses, in addition to the 40 houses for which tenders had been approved. This offer was given provided invitations to tender for the work were not issued without the Board's prior permission.<sup>27</sup>

On February 26th, 1923, a letter was submitted to the above Committee concerning the ten additional houses to be built at Spittalfield Road, with a plan showing modifications which the Board was prepared to sanction on



the types already adopted.<sup>28</sup> Later in the year, on July 3rd, the Committee considered the amended plans and instructed their architect to proceed with plans of eight type E and two type A houses, on the lines of the latest plan received from the S.B.H., subject to certain modifications which he was to adjust with the Board's Architectural Inspector.<sup>29</sup>

The S.B.H. later approved the acceptance of tenders for two blocks of two-storey flatted houses of three apartments, Type F; also one two-storey double cottage of three apartments, Type A; ten houses in all.<sup>30</sup>

As regards the layout of Inverkeithing's housing scheme, all the houses were built along Spittalfield Road, at a density of approximately twelve houses to the acre. To avoid monotony, one small group of houses was set back from the road in a crescent formation. The house types included a semi-detached cottage with a hipped roof, as in the Dunfermline scheme; a larger block of houses of a fairly straightforward design, again with patterned brickwork; and a long block of houses with a pend to provide access to the back gardens. The designs lacked such features as gables and dormers, and in some cases were adapted to the gradient of the road by having one end of the house built up considerably higher than the other.

A further housing scheme was planned under the 1923 Housing Act, this was discussed by the Housing Sub-Committee on November 19th. It was decided that the density of cottages should not exceed 12 per acre, two-storey flatted houses 10 per acre, and tenement houses not exceeding three storeys, 24 per acre. The proposal for tenement blocks was again unusual, as such housing was rarely, if at all, sanctioned under the housing schemes. It was intended that 50 houses should be built under this scheme by March 31st, 1925.<sup>31</sup>

Footnotes.

1. Inverkeithing Town Council Minutes, Town Council, Dec 21st 1911.
2. Ibid. July 12th 1912.
3. I.T.C.M., Town Planning Committee, Dec 4th 1918.
4. I.T.C.M., Housing Sub-Committee, March 6th 1919.
5. Ibid. Aug 1st 1919.
6. Ibid. Sept 29th 1919.
7. I.T.C.M., Town Council, Oct 20th 1919.
8. Ibid. Nov 14th 1919.
9. Idem.
10. I.T.C.M., Town Council, Jan 9th 1920.
11. Idem.
12. I.T.C.M., Housing Sub-Committee, Feb 24th 1920.
13. Ibid. March 4th 1920.
14. I.T.C.M., Housing Committee, March 15th 1920.
15. I.T.C.M., Town Council, April 2nd 1920.
16. I.T.C.M., Housing Sub-Committee, April 22nd 1920.
17. I.T.C.M., Town Council, April 27th 1920.
18. Ibid. June 4th 1920.
19. Ibid. Nov 8th 1921.
20. Ibid. Dec 2nd 1921.
21. Idem.
22. Idem.
23. I.T.C.M., Town Council, Jan 5th 1922.
24. I.T.C.M., Housing Sub-Committee, Jan 16th 1922.
25. I.T.C.M., Town Council, March 2nd 1922.
26. I.T.C.M., Housing Sub-Committee, March 16th 1922.
27. Ibid. Dec 19th 1921.
28. Ibid. Feb 26th 1923.
29. Ibid. July 3rd 1923.

30. I.T.C.M., Town Council, Nov 1st 1923.

31. I.T.C.M., Housing Sub-Committee, Nov 19th 1923.

### Chapter 13.

#### Kirkcaldy's Housing Scheme.

A brief summary of the development of housing in Kirkcaldy is given in the 1950 Civic Survey for the Royal Burgh of Kirkcaldy, which records that building had been extensive from the beginning of the century until 1914, 1824 houses being built.' The vast majority of these were two storey tenements with outside stairs at the back as access to the upper flats. As a result of the war, no houses were built between 1915 and 1919, which lead to an acute shortage of housing accommodation.

The housing shortage, however, was already a considerable problem even before the outbreak of war. The burgh's Medical Officer of Health, in his Annual Report for 1913, wrote:

"The deficiency in housing accommodation is rapidly becoming a serious matter. There are comparatively few houses standing vacant at present, and I understand that applications for the two and three roomed houses of the better working-class standard greatly exceed the supply. The deficiency in housing, it seems, is not confined to Kirkcaldy, but extends to all the suurounding district, as many workmen employed in the neighbouring coal-fields are enquiring for house accommodation in the burgh."

Indeed, by the end of 1918, the situation had worsened, as was shown by a letter published in The Fife Free Press on December 28th 1918. The letter observed that the dearth of working class houses in Kirkcaldy was not as well known by the authorities as it ought to have been, and that such accommodation was simply not available:

"When a tenant leaves a house, say for another town, there will be twenty or more applicants for the house he is leaving, and thus nineteen or more are disappointed."

Early in 1919, however, the Town Council began making preparations for a municipal housing scheme. On January 14th 1919, The Mail for Kirkcaldy,

Central and West Fife reported that the Provost's Committee had been considering the steps for providing working class houses in the burgh. It had been agreed that the officials should report on the suitable building ground within the various wards, and also that pressure should be put on the Government regarding the need for two-roomed houses.<sup>4</sup>

Further progress had been made by June 1919, as the above journal reported on June 24th.<sup>5</sup> The Kirkcaldy architects, William Williamson, F.R.I.B.A.; William B. Wyllie and William Syme, had been appointed to carry out the work of the housing scheme. Syme, previously the Dean of Guild, had resigned his seat on the Council in order to take up this work.

According to the article, 400 houses of three and four apartments were to be built, at a density of no more than twelve houses to the acre. The sites were to be approximately four acres off Barnett Crescent (later known as the Ramsay Road site) in the first ward; 15 acres on the west side of Hendry Road to the north of Forth Park in the second ward; and not more than 25 acres in the third ward, on the ground between Overton Road and Pannie Den. The acquisition of the ground and the preparation of the layout plans were reported to be in progress.<sup>6</sup>

On November 27th 1919, a letter was submitted to the Provost's Committee from the S.B.H. informing the Town Council that they approved the layout and street section plans for the Overton Road site, subject to minor alterations.<sup>7</sup> 54 houses were intended for the site, 42 of three apartments and 12 of four apartments, however the Board recommended an increase in the proportion of four apartment houses, whereby 60% (32 houses) would be of three apartments, and 40% (22 houses), four apartments. For the scheme as a whole, the local authority proposed to build 540 houses, 270 of three apartments, 246 of four apartments, and 24 of five apartments,<sup>8</sup> a far greater number than previously reported in the press.

William Macindoe, the Kirkcaldy Town Clerk, compiled a report dated November 15th 1919, concerning the financial aspect of the housing scheme.<sup>9</sup>

As mentioned above, 540 houses were to be built, the estimated cost was £1000 per house. Contracts would be subject to increases in wages and costs of materials; there was also a shortage of builders and joiners, etc, which would result in rising wages. Macindoe therefore recommended that the Town Council should not enter into contracts to build the houses unless a minimum of £750,000 could be provided.

Obtaining the necessary finances proved to be difficult, as the Government had determined that local authorities with a rateable value exceeding £200,000 must borrow the money on their own account. Kirkcaldy came into this category, and was unable to raise £540,000, let alone £750,000.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, preparations for the scheme went ahead, and on January 6th 1920, the Town Clerk reported to the Provost's Committee that the type plans for the houses had been sent to the Board for approval on December 31st. A letter was submitted from Williamson, Wyllie and Syme, confirming that all the layout and type plans had now been approved and were ready for the measurer.<sup>14</sup>

The S.B.H. had requested the Town Council to consider increasing the proportion of four apartment houses;<sup>15</sup> however, the Town Clerk was instructed on January 19th 1920 to inform the Board that the Provost's Committee still believed that there was little demand for such houses in the district, and that they could not see their way to increasing the number.<sup>16</sup>

On March 13th 1920, the S.B.H. gave provisional approval to the Council's scheme.<sup>17</sup> The Board remained entitled to require, if necessary, the submission of a further scheme; also, if the number of houses to be erected proved to be in excess of the number actually required, the Board had the power to alter the scheme accordingly.<sup>18</sup> Final approval for the scheme would be given when estimates of the costs of the housing and of the rents were sent to the Board.

The above letter also stated that under Section 5 of the Housing, Town Planning etc (Scotland) Act, 1919, it would be a condition of government financial assistance that the Board was satisfied that reasonable progress had been made with the scheme within twelve months from August 19th 1919, or such further period as the Board might allow. Such assistance would not be given for any scheme or part of a scheme not carried into effect within three years from the above date, or such further period as the Board might allow.<sup>11</sup>

Two months later, in a letter dated May 7th 1920, the Board urged the Town Council to proceed with "utmost expedition" so that building operations could be started.<sup>12</sup> The financing of the scheme remained a problem, however, despite a letter from the S.B.H. dated May 19th 1920, informing the Council that, having regard to the difference between English and Scottish rating systems, the Treasury had arranged that loans for housing schemes should now be available in Scotland to local authorities having a valuation not exceeding £250,000.<sup>13</sup> The town clerk later replied to the S.B.H. on August 19th, stating that the valuation roll for that year would probably come to nearly £250,000, and that it was certain that this figure would be greatly exceeded the following year. As the town clerk saw no possibility for the scheme being completed within one year, he asked whether Kirkcaldy would be eligible for financial assistance.<sup>14</sup> On September 10th, the town clerk reported that from the correspondence which had been circulated, it would appear that the Town Council could not expect a Government loan.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, on October 11th, the Council resolved to borrow £200,000 for the housing scheme, at an interest rate of 6%.<sup>16</sup> On November 16th, the Finance Committee resolved to raise this sum by means of housing bonds in the terms recommended by the S.B.H.<sup>17</sup>

Further arrangements for the housing scheme.

Despite the financial problems, arrangements for the scheme continued. The housing situation had, however, worsened. On July 6th 1920, The Mail for Kirkcaldy, Central and West Fife quoted a section of the annual report by Dr. McIntosh, the burgh's Medical Officer of Health, concerning the housing shortage. McIntosh stated:

"In my report for 1913, attention was directed to the deficiency in housing that then existed. Practically no houses have been built since then, and the deficiency is much more aggravated now. The need for additional housing in the burgh is just as clamant as it appears to be elsewhere, and the lack of it is a matter of the greatest importance, not only for the moment, but also for the future, as it is sure to exercise a baneful influence on the moral and physical well-being of the population."<sup>23</sup>

On the same day, the above journal referred again to McIntosh's report, this time dealing with the findings of the health visitors in Kirkcaldy during 1919. Out of 44 one-roomed houses, 20 contained three occupants, 11 had four occupants, seven houses had five occupants, five had six, and one house had seven occupants. Out of 209 two-roomed houses, 41 had four occupants, 53 had five, 38 had six, 33 had seven, 22 had eight, 10 had nine, eight houses had ten, three had eleven, and one house contained as many as fourteen occupants. The article added that this overcrowding was aggravated in many cases by the smallness of the rooms and the insufficient lighting and ventilation.<sup>24</sup>

By late 1920, however, progress had been made with the details of the housing scheme. On November 15th, the Provost's Committee resolved that the first instalment of the scheme should consist of 54 houses on the Ramsay Road site, which was to complete the intended scheme for that particular site; also 24 houses on the Hendry Road site and 40 houses on the Overton Road site.<sup>25</sup> Recreation areas were to be included on the Overton Road and Ramsay Road sites, also trees and shrubs were to be provided. The S.B.H.,



seemingly having agreed to financial assistance after all, was prepared to allow a maximum charge of 15 shillings per house against the housing scheme for trees and shrubs.<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, no houses had actually been built, and on November 16th, The Mail for Kirkcaldy, Central and West Fife reported that the S.B.H. had written to the Town Council, complaining of undue delay, and urging that "every expedition" be exercised.<sup>27</sup> Apparently, the Town Clerk had been instructed to reply that the delay did not rest with the Council. The article continued:

"Then on whom does the blame rest for the delay in providing houses? That is a question which the average citizen would like to have answered, and which will have to be answered soon, as the patience of the people is nearing the breaking point. ...not one brick has been laid yet so far as that scheme is concerned."<sup>28</sup>

According to the article, the Council contended that there was difficulty in obtaining the necessary sites, and furthermore, it seemed that owing to the resulting delay, the Council might not be able to claim the Government subsidy.

Although the Council had not yet received the subsidy, the S.B.H., in a letter dated March 31st 1921, approved the tenders for the work on the housing scheme, subject to certain alterations which the Board believed would be more economical.<sup>29</sup>

Seven house types were approved by the Board, types A to G. Type A was a two storey double cottage of three apartments; Type B was a block of four two-storey houses of three apartments; Type C was a two-storey double cottage of four apartments, a variant of which was designed with a northern frontage, this being somewhat more expensive than the other types. Type D was a block of four two-storey houses of four apartments, Type E was another two-storey double cottage of four apartments, and Type F was a

double cottage of five apartments, with a parlour. Type G was a block of four two-storey flatted houses of three apartments.<sup>30</sup>

The S.B.H. suggested to the Council that in view of the relative costs, they should consider substituting three-apartment cottages for the flats, which were not so favoured by tenants as the semi-detached types and were in this case more costly.<sup>31</sup> So as to obtain some variety in appearance and to avoid monotony, the Board suggested that where there was to be a number of Type E houses together, some alteration might be made to the front elevations without affecting the cost of building.<sup>32</sup>

The housing scheme had been much reduced from the 540 houses which had originally been proposed, indeed, the S.B.H. had approved the building of just 118 houses. The Town Council still had great difficulty in obtaining the necessary finances by May 1921, by which date certain other housing schemes in Fife had been officially opened. On May 12th 1921, the Town Clerk wrote to the S.B.H. stating that the estimated cost for the housing scheme would be £150,000. Although the Town Council was anxious to proceed with the scheme, only £34,000 had been raised by loans from the public. The Town Clerk stressed that houses were urgently needed from a sanitary point of view, and suggested that the Council would proceed with the 118 houses provided that the Local Loans Commissioners agreed to guarantee a loan of £100,000. The Council would then raise £16,000 in addition to the £34,000 already raised, however the scheme would have to be seriously curtailed if the Town Council did not feel financially safe.<sup>33</sup> The housing scheme, however, went ahead, thus the Council must have received the necessary loan.

#### The delays in the housing scheme's progress.

In January 1922, Williamson, Wyllie and Syme reported that 36 houses would be completed by Whitsunday and would be ready for occupation.<sup>34</sup> The

scheme, however, was not being completed as quickly as had been hoped, which caused much impatience on the part of prospective tenants. On January 7th 1922, The Fife Free Press printed a letter concerning the problem. The letter began:

"The Town Council seem to forget that they have such a responsibility as the provision of houses for a great number of people in the town. I am certain that there are many, like myself, who have almost reached the limit of their patiences, and are exasperated at the indifference of our Councillors ... For a considerable time I have visited these houses [at Hendry Road] weekly with the hope of seeing them getting near completion, but the difference each week is so small as not to be apparent."<sup>35</sup>

It was pointed out that while there seemed no likelihood of the Kirkcaldy houses being finished that year, those in most other towns had been occupied in a quarter of the time it had taken for the Hendry Road houses to reach their present state.<sup>36</sup>

The Hendry Road houses were, however, completed and occupied by December 14th 1922.<sup>37</sup> All the houses at the Ramsay Road site were completed and occupied by February 28th 1923,<sup>38</sup> while the Overton Road site was completed by April 1923.<sup>39</sup>

On February 18th 1922, The Fife Free Press reported a meeting of the Provost's Committee, held on January 26th, at which the architects had explained the causes for the delay in the housing. The principal cause was the lack of slates. The Committee resolved that a representative should be sent to the S.B.H. to point out that a Kirkcaldy firm held a stock of around 30,000 slates which could be used for the scheme.<sup>40</sup>

In the House of Commons on February 9th, Thomas Kennedy, the Labour M.P. for Kirkcaldy Burghs asked Sir Alfred Mond, the Minister of Health, if he was aware that the alleged scarcity of slates had recently delayed the housing scheme; whether there was any regulation restricting the supply of slates for approved housing schemes, and whether he could give any reason for refusing to sanction the use of an available local supply of slates.<sup>41</sup>

On February 22nd, a letter was sent to Kennedy, from Mond's private secretary, D. Veale, explaining that the Ministry of Health held certain stocks of slates purchased by the Director of Building Material Supplies for Scottish housing schemes.<sup>4.2</sup> Mond was anxious that the D.B.M.S. should be brought to an end as early as possible, in order that local authorities could be free to make their own arrangements for materials. Before this could be done, however, it was necessary that existing stocks should be disposed of, thus the Ministry of Health and the S.B.H. were arranging for local authorities to take delivery of such stocks.

It was understood that in the case of Kirkcaldy, the slates were being sent by boat, and that there had recently been some delay due to bad weather. The Edinburgh branch of the D.B.M.S. had conferred with the S.B.H., consequently, in order to expedite the completion of the houses, the local authority was now authorised to purchase 30,000 slates locally. A further supply of slates from Government stocks was also to be forwarded that week.<sup>4.3</sup>

The rents for the houses were settled at a meeting of the Provost's Committee, held on January 26th 1922. A letter was submitted to the meeting, from the S.B.H., dated January 25th, approving the rents proposed by the local authority, as follows: Type A, three apartments, £22; Type B, three apartments, £22; Type B, four apartments, £24; Type C, four apartments, £25; Type D, four apartments, £24; and Type E, four apartments, £25.

The local authority had suggested a rent of £27 for Type F, having five apartments with a parlour; however, the Board recommended a rent of £28, thus charging an additional £3 for the extra apartment, the same addition as for the extra apartment of Types C and E as compared with Type A. The Board were also of opinion that a uniform rent of £21 should be charged for upper and lower flats in the three apartment flatted houses, Type G. It was

pointed out that the living room in the upper flats had a larger floor area, and that there was the additional advantage of having no tenants above.

Further recommendations were that since the houses were for the working classes, the term of let should not exceed six months, and that without the permission of the local authority, tenants should be prohibited from sub-letting or taking in lodgers.

The Committee consequently recommended the Town Council to agree to the rents as now fixed by the Board.<sup>44</sup>

#### Plans for additional houses.

In a letter dated February 16th 1922, the S.B.H. allocated a further 60 houses to Kirkcaldy.<sup>45</sup> The Board had secured the sanction of the Treasury to the provision of a certain number of additional houses by local authorities in Scotland.

Consequently, on June 19th, the Provost's Committee recommended the Town Council to erect 30 additional houses in Hendry Road, consisting of ten four-roomed houses and twenty three-roomed houses; and also to erect 30 additional three-roomed houses in Overton Road.<sup>46</sup>

At a meeting of the Provost's Committee held on February 19th 1923, a report was submitted from the S.B.H. concerning the additional houses for Overton Road.<sup>47</sup> The report explained that the Board had received a number of representatives from local authorities, stating that the rents fixed for houses hitherto built were higher than the working classes were able or willing to pay. The Board had therefore prepared simplified house plans in place of those submitted by the Town Council, these were for three and four apartment cottages and a three apartment flat. The local authority was advised to consider these alternative plans, bearing in mind certain points of comparison with the plans previously approved.<sup>48</sup>

The standard of construction was not to be altered, the height of the ceilings and the area of the living room were to remain the same, however, there were to be slight reductions in the areas of the bedrooms and scullery. A major difference was that the bathroom was to be omitted, the bath instead to be provided in the scullery, and fitted with a moveable or hinged cover. The sink and bath were to be fitted near to the living room fire, thus securing a saving in the fittings for hot water. A larger and deeper sink was to be provided in place of a washtub, similarly, a bunker would be provided in the scullery in place of a coal house. The length of passage was to be reduced, the w.c. was to be in a separate apartment, and the chimney stack for the bedrooms was to be omitted from the three apartment houses. In the four apartment houses, the stack for the living room would serve the largest bedroom. Where gas was available, gas fires could be installed in the larger bedrooms of the three apartment houses. While the areas of the living apartments remained similar to before, there was a considerable reduction in the overall area of the houses, which would enable an appreciable reduction in cost, therefore a lower rent would be chargeable. The S.B.H. was prepared to consider the local authority's suggestions as to these amendments.<sup>49</sup>

On March 19th 1923, the Sanitary Inspector and the Burgh Surveyor submitted to the Provost's Committee a report on the modified plans. They believed that it would be a retrograde step to erect such houses at that time, and found the Board's alterations quite unsatisfactory.<sup>50</sup> According to their report, the great need in Kirkcaldy was for three-apartment houses with suitable bathrooms and sculleries; also, the three-apartment flatted house was considered more suitable for the majority of families than the cottage type of two storeys. The Town Clerk was therefore instructed to send a copy of the above report to the S.B.H., stating that the Committee was unable to adopt the Board's modified plans.<sup>51</sup>

At a subsequent meeting held on April 24th 1923, between representatives of the local authority, their architect, and the S.B.H.'s architectural inspector; it was agreed that the additional houses for the Overton Road site should all be of three apartments, and of the flatted type, partly similar to those already built.<sup>52</sup> This simplified Type G provided three rooms, with one bedroom entering from the kitchen, a separate bathroom, a coal house, and both a sink and a tub in the scullery. This arrangement gave a combined floor space in the three rooms and scullery of 525 feet instead of 551 feet as in the plans already adopted. A reduction of about £70 per house could therefore be made, equal to a reduction of £3 per year in rental.<sup>53</sup>

The S.B.H., in a letter dated June 4th 1923, reminded the local authority that in order to rank for subsidy, all the houses had to be completed by August 19th 1924, and that the utmost expedition was necessary in regard to the housing scheme.<sup>54</sup> The Board later approved the simplified Type G subject to satisfactory tenders, and some minor technical details.<sup>55</sup>

On July 12th 1923, a deputation from the Council visited the S.B.H., regarding an application for a further 120 houses on the Addison scheme, also the possibility of Government subsidy for a slum clearance scheme.<sup>56</sup> The Board was unable to grant either request, however, the Council was recommended to proceed with the preparation of a slum clearance scheme in case of any further allotment of subsidy. With regard to the 1923 Housing Act, the Board recommended the Council to try to increase private building by giving subsidy to private builders. The Town Council therefore agreed to advertise in the press that the Provost's Committee was prepared to recommend the Council to give a grant of £100 per three-roomed house completed by September 30th 1925, and to recommend liberal loans to builders.<sup>57</sup>

A further eight houses were, however, allocated to the local authority on August 29th 1923, also to be completed within a year so as to be

eligible for subsidy. The S.B.H. recommended that, having regard to the costs, these, and the 32 additional houses for the Overton Road site, should all be of the simplified type, now called Type H. A combination of types A, G and H had originally been planned, however, the Provost's Committee agreed to the Board's suggestion on August 31st.

The Medical Officer of Health's report for 1922-23.

On June 18th 1923, a report was submitted to the Health Committee from Dr. McIntosh, the Medical Officer of Health. The conditions found to be in urgent need of remedy were insufficiency of housing accommodation, slum areas needing clearance, overcrowding, sub-division of houses, worn-out houses for which closing orders were overdue, and houses needing improvement or alteration. The report stated:

"About three years ago the Town Council fixed on certain building sites which were approved by the S.B.H., and it was calculated that these sites would provide accommodation for 540 houses. ... Presumably the Council were satisfied that at least 500 additional houses were required to meet the needs of the population. Up to the present time only 118 houses have been built and another 60 are arranged for, a total when completed of 178 houses. It appears reasonable to suggest that the 178 houses completed or arranged for are quite inadequate to meet the necessity of the case."

It was pointed out that a day never passed without some application for housing assistance being received by the Public Health Department. The demand came not only from those without a house, but also from tenants of small houses, principally those of two rooms, requiring houses with more accommodation. The report explained that the population had been "undergoing a process of education in hygiene", the results of which were evident in the desire for a better standard of house than would have satisfied their predecessors of a generation previously.



The Town Council was advised to plot out certain areas for slum clearance, several areas of Kirkcaldy being described as "blots on our civilisation". No steps could be taken in demolition, however, until alternative housing became available.

With regard to overcrowding, although there were certainly cases of large families who could not afford a house of suitable size, apparently in the majority of cases, if sufficient houses were available, then "the remedy would lie in the hands of the tenant". There would then be good reason to take strong measures against the overcrowding under the Housing Acts, Section 76 of the Public Health Act, or the Burgh Police Act.

According to the report, the practice of sub-letting a room of a two or three roomed house had grown rapidly since the war. This form of overcrowding was caused by the desire to make money, the failure to realise the injury done to the tenants' own families, also sympathy for those without houses. It was stressed that sub-division was unsuitable for working class houses, that no two or three roomed house could be satisfactorily divided into two houses, and that permission for such action should not be granted.

The report concluded that the chief remedy for all these problems was to proceed with building at least as many more houses as had already been built or approved.

#### The layout and designs of the houses.

The Overton Road site was by far the largest of the three Kirkcaldy developments, and was built at a density of around eleven houses to the acre, thus conforming with Garden City derived principles. The layout featured a central playground, and a number of curving crescents; in the case of the straight roads, variety was added by grouping certain houses around small crescent-shaped areas set aside for trees.

#### Footnotes.

1. Civic Survey for the Royal Burgh of Kirkcaldy, December 1950, p.74.
2. Quoted in a letter from the L.G.B. dated May 12th 1914. Kirkcaldy Town Council Minutes, Provost's Committee, May 19th 1914.
3. Fife Free Press, Dec 28th 1918, p.3.
4. The Mail for Kirkcaldy, Central and West Fife, Jan 14th 1919, p.2.
5. Ibid, June 24th 1919, p.2.
6. Idem.
7. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, Nov 27th 1919.
8. Idem.
9. K.T.C.M., Report by Town Clerk, Nov 15th 1919.
10. Idem.
11. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, Jan 6th 1920.
12. Letter from S.B.H., Nov 17th 1919, submitted to Provost's Committee, Nov 27th 1919. K.T.C.M.
13. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, Jan 19th 1920.
14. Ibid, March 15th 1920.
15. Idem.
16. Idem.
17. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, May 17th 1920.
18. Ibid, June 8th 1920.
19. K.T.C.M., Dean of Guild Court, Oct 5th 1920.
20. K.T.C.M., Report by Town Clerk, Sept 10th 1920.
21. K.T.C.M., Town Council, Oct 11th 1920.
22. K.T.C.M., Finance Committee, Nov 16th 1920.
23. The Mail for Kirkcaldy, Central and West Fife, July 6th 1920, p.1.
24. Ibid, p.2.
25. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, Nov 15th 1920.
26. Ibid, Dec 20th 1920.
27. The Mail for Kirkcaldy, Central and West Fife, Nov 16th 1920, p.1.
28. Idem.

29. K.T.C.M., letter from S.B.H., March 31st 1921.
30. Idem.
31. Idem.
32. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, May 17th 1921.
33. K.T.C.M., Joint Provost's and Finance Committees, May 17th 1921.
34. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, Jan 26th 1922.
35. Fife Free Press, Jan 7th 1922, p.3.
36. Idem.
37. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, Dec 18th 1922.
38. Ibid, March 6th 1923.
39. K.T.C.M., Architects' monthly report, dated March 7th 1923, stated that the last block of houses would be ready by the beginning of April.
40. Fife Free Press, Feb 18th 1922, p.2.
41. Ibid, Feb 11th 1922, p.3, also House of Commons Debates, Feb 9th 1922, col 323-4.
42. Fife Free Press, Feb 25th 1922, p.5.
43. Idem.
44. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, Jan 26th 1922.
45. K.T.C.M., letter from S.B.H., Feb 16th 1922.
46. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, June 19th 1922.
47. Ibid, Feb 19th 1923.
48. Idem.
49. Idem.
50. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, March 19th 1923.
51. Idem.
52. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, May 21st 1923.
53. Idem.
54. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, June 5th 1923.
55. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee July 3rd 1923, letter from S.B.H. dated July 2nd 1923.
56. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, July 12th 1923.
57. Idem.

58. K.T.C.M., Provost's Committee, Aug 31st 1923.

59. K.T.C.M., Health Committee, June 18th 1923.

60. Idem.

61. Idem.

62. Idem.

63. Idem.

64. Idem.

## Chapter 14.

### Buckhaven and Methil.

During November 1918, the Housing Committee of Buckhaven, Methil and Innerleven Town Council recommended that the matter of housing should be delayed, in the hope of improved terms of financial assistance being offered by the Government. Nevertheless, it was also recommended that application should be made to the Wemyss Estate Trustees, with a view to their feuing ground for the building of state-assisted houses.'

New conditions were received from the L.G.B.S. regarding financial assistance, consequently, on February 17th 1919, the Housing Committee instructed the Burgh Surveyor to prepare a plan of the sites suggested for the housing scheme. The Committee also recommended that the Town Council should agree to their sending a deputation to inspect the various building schemes carried out in Scotland, and to examine the plans of the Architectural Associations.<sup>4</sup> The Town Council later agreed that a deputation should be sent to inspect the housing plans on exhibition in Edinburgh.<sup>4</sup>

On February 19th 1919, however, The Mail for Leven, Wemyss and East Fife already expressed impatience at the scheme's apparent lack of definite progress, and observed:

"Buckhaven housing scheme progresses with speed equal to that attending similar projects elsewhere - a progress so slow as to be imperceptible. At this rate we will have another generation before the lums of the new houses are smoking."<sup>4</sup>

The article suggested that certain condemned houses in Innerleven should be converted into houses for elderly couples. Although it was agreed that these houses had been rightly condemned, the journal stressed that the house famine should make the authorities revise their views.

A report was submitted to the Town Council on April 7th 1919, from the Housing Committee, which recommended that the houses should be built on three sites, these being on the ground between Wellesley Road and Muiredge Farm; on the ground behind the skating rink, Denbeath; and also on ground to the east of Methil Brae.<sup>6</sup> The Town Council agreed to proceed with the housing scheme on these sites. The main question discussed at the above meeting was whether the plans for the scheme should be prepared in the Burgh Surveyor's office, or by an independent architect. Following discussion, it was agreed to advertise for an architect in the two local newspapers, also in The Scotsman and The Glasgow Herald.<sup>6</sup>

Consequently, on May 5th 1919, the Town Council appointed G. Charles Campbell, of Methil, as the architect for the housing scheme.' At a Special Meeting of the Town Council, held later that month, it was resolved to proceed with a scheme for 250 houses, 160 of which were to be built within the prescribed time limit.<sup>6</sup>

During July 1919, the Town Council, evidently being aware of the Government's new emphasis on housing design from the woman's standpoint, agreed to ask representatives from the Women's Guild, Buckhaven, Denbeath and Methil, to attend the next meeting of the Housing Committee so as to express their opinions on the proposed houses.<sup>3</sup>

On September 22nd, the Council approved the various type plans for the housing scheme, also the Housing Committee's recommendation of the following 64 houses for the Methil site: eight blocks of two three-roomed houses; five blocks of four flatted houses (presumably of three rooms); eight blocks of two north aspect houses of four rooms, parlour type; and six blocks of two north aspect houses of four rooms.<sup>10</sup>

Three months later, the Council agreed to the above Committee's recommendation that the housing scheme should be submitted to the S.B.H., subject to the alteration that the Buckhaven scheme should consist of 93 three-apartment houses, 75 four-apartment houses, and 18 five-apartment

houses.' In their report submitted to the above meeting, the Housing Committee mentioned that as the Wemyss Coal Company was unlikely to build any houses, it might be necessary for the local authority to build at least 150 additional houses.<sup>12</sup>

At the same meeting, it was agreed that the Housing Committee should go to Edinburgh to inspect the grates, ranges and baths, etc., for the housing scheme, also that the Council should advertise for loans in connection with the scheme.

Following consideration of various letters from the S.B.H. regarding the type plans and specifications, the Housing Committee resolved to adhere to the type plans for the Methil site, however the 186 houses for the Buckhaven site were reallocated as follows: 70 three-roomed houses, 98 four-roomed houses, and 18 five-roomed houses; thus reducing the proportion of three-roomed houses and increasing the number of four-roomed houses.<sup>13</sup> On January 5th 1920, the Town Council approved the above recommendation, and also agreed to adhere to the plan, Type A, a three-roomed cottage type with a bathroom upstairs, instead of the 'Type G' recommended by the S.B.H. It was further agreed to adhere to the original Type F, a five-roomed cottage type with a w.c. downstairs and bathroom upstairs, and to adopt Type H (a three roomed flatted type) as recommended by the Board, instead of the flatted Type B.<sup>14</sup>

The following month, on February 2nd, the Treasurer reported to the Town Council that it was necessary that arrangements should be made for borrowing £200,000 upon the security of the Burgh assessments, for the Buckhaven and Methil housing schemes.<sup>15</sup> On May 6th, the S.B.H. wrote to the Housing Committee, approving of the local authority borrowing £200,000 for the houses at Buckhaven and Methil, £25,000 of which was to be loaned from the Wemyss Coal Company for three years at 5½%; £75,000 from the Public Works Loans Board, and £100,000 being raised by the issue of Local Bonds, at 6% interest.<sup>16</sup>

On June 7th 1920, the Town Council agreed to postpone the question of erecting an additional 150 houses until further information was received from the Wemyss Coal Company and the Wemyss Estate Trustees. It was also decided that all grates, ironmongery, etc., for the houses should be purchased through the Director of Building Material Supplies.<sup>17</sup>

Possibly having received the necessary information, on June 15th, the Housing Committee visited various sites in the burgh for the purpose of building the 150 additional houses. Two sites were recommended, one being the vacant ground at Aberhill, the other being the unbuilt-on ground adjoining the road leading from Methilbrae to Crossroads, and to the north of the Fife Coal Company's railway.<sup>18</sup> These sites were approved by the Town Council on June 21st 1920.<sup>19</sup> The S.B.H. consequently wrote to the Council on November 3rd 1920, approving of the additional houses to be built on the Crossroads site.<sup>20</sup>

The housing situation in Buckhaven and Methil during this time was evidently as serious as in most other areas of Fife. On June 16th, The Mail for Leven, Wemyss and East Fife quoted from the report submitted to the S.B.H. and the Town Council by Peter Sinclair, the Sanitary Inspector. Sinclair wrote:

"At present housing accommodation is not to be had, with the result that overcrowding exists all over the burgh. Many rooms are being sub-let to families without consideration of their own requirements. Many applications have been made by parties in such circumstances asking either for removal of their sub-tenants, or the sub-tenants asking for other accommodation, there being instances of as many as 15 and 16 living in a three-roomed house."<sup>21</sup>

On July 7th, the above journal reported upon the meeting of the Town Council held two days previously. The Convener, James Galloway, had claimed that it was impossible to fit both a bath and a wash-hand basin in the three-roomed houses, and for this reason it had been decided to leave out the basins rather than to alter the plans. Bailie Smart had asked whether



these alterations were, in the Convener's opinion, in the interests of the houses or in the interests of the contractors; to which Galloway replied that the proposed alterations were not vital, and that he did not believe that they would detract from the value of the houses or benefit the contractors in any way. This alteration was then agreed upon.<sup>22</sup>

#### Progress during 1921-22.

By early 1921, the control of building materials had evidently become somewhat stricter. On January 10th, the Town Council received a report from the Housing Committee, concerning a letter received the previous month from the D.B.M.S. The letter stated that arrangements whereby contractors, on production of a certificate signed by the local authority, might order materials direct from manufacturers, were now cancelled in the Scottish area. All requisitions were to be sent directly to the D.B.M.S., and in no case were to be addressed to the merchant or manufacturer.<sup>23</sup>

On February 7th, the Town Council approved the Housing Committee's recommended rents for the housing schemes. These were to be £20 for a three roomed house, both cottage and flatted types; £24 for a four-roomed house; and £26 for a five-roomed house.<sup>24</sup>

As in many other housing schemes, the supply of bricks appeared to have been a problem for the Buckhaven and Methil scheme. On March 10th 1921, however, The Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette reported that Councillor Galloway had informed the Town Council that the brick question had, in a way, been solved, and that they were now in a much better position than they had been for some time. Permission had been obtained from the Board of Health to purchase bricks in the open market, with the result that contracts had been placed with four or five companies, and that the bricks were now coming rapidly to hand.<sup>25</sup>

On March 15th, a plan was submitted to the Housing Committee from the S.B.H., showing a proposed amendment on the houses in the second development at Wellesley Road, Methil. The Committee agreed to adopt this amendment, which was intended to relieve the monotony of many types of similar houses being built.<sup>26</sup>

At the above meeting, a letter was submitted from Messrs. James Diston and Son, house furnishers, of Leven, offering to furnish a three-roomed and a five-roomed house for exhibition. The Committee agreed to this proposal on the understanding that the houses would not be open for exhibition before the official opening ceremony, and that they would be on exhibition for no longer than six days after the ceremony. It was further agreed that the opening ceremony should take place on Saturday May 14th.<sup>27</sup>

With regard to the 150 additional houses, the Housing Committee recommended on April 21st that the Town Council should proceed with the building of these houses on the Crossroads site, and that immediate steps should be taken to contact all parties concerned with the proposed Burgh extension to include the above site.<sup>28</sup> The S.B.H., however, had informed the Committee that the Board could not give any undertaking that the extension would be granted, although favourable consideration would be given to allow the completion of houses which were almost completed by August 1922.<sup>29</sup>

The opening ceremony of the housing scheme was reported in The Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette on May 19th 1921. The ceremony was held at Buckhaven; where 14 houses were ready for occupation. A further 16 houses were ready at the Methil site.<sup>30</sup>

Provost Smart, addressing the large audience, declared that he was very pleased to see so many women present, for the housing problem was very much a woman's question. The journal reported his speech as follows:

"A woman's realm lay in her house. She spent a very large part of her life-time in it, the health of her children depended upon its nature; and she therefore had an unanswerable right to demand from those responsible - in this case the state and the local authority - that the house should be such that it would be possible to convert it into a real home. That was the ideal the Council had before it."<sup>31</sup>

Smart added that the Council recognised that it was not sufficient simply to provide enough houses; they had to provide houses which would be "worthy of the name of home", and he believed that the Council had succeeded in what it set out to do.

He explained that after the war, the Council had been confronted with a serious shortage of houses, while a very large number of houses were unfit for human habitation. The Council had therefore decided first of all to house the houseless, and then to substitute good houses for bad. The first difficulty had been solved by the schemes for 250 and 150 houses, however, the second was an even more difficult problem. It would be the duty of the Council to issue closing orders as regarded houses which were defective and unfit for habitation. The "dark, crowded courts and narrow streets" would have to be wiped out, and a complete re-housing scheme would have to be planned. Smart claimed that, until this was done, they would never have contented and happy citizens.<sup>32</sup>

In a subsequent speech, the Convener, James Galloway, remarked that a bad house was:

"a fertile and prolific incubator of vice, crime and disease",<sup>33</sup> believing that it was preferable to spend money on better houses placed in healthy surroundings than on sanatoria and other curative institutions.

Galloway commented that the housing scheme was of a greater magnitude than any other scheme the burgh had ever embarked upon. There would be 186 houses on the Buckhaven site, 64 in Methil, and the Council was committed to providing a further 150 houses, making a total of 400. It was believed that this number of houses would meet the immediate needs of the community.

He declared that the burgh was undoubtedly indebted to their architect, Charles Campbell; and to Peter Sinclair, for the very fine layout scheme.<sup>34</sup>

The journal reported that considerable interest was taken in the houses furnished for the occasion by Messrs. Diston and Son. The firm had set out to furnish the houses at a reasonable cost, a task which, it was claimed, many critics of the housing schemes had described as impossible. The scheme for the living room in particular apparently appealed to many as fulfilling the modern idea of furnishing:

"for while being on the most extremely simple lines throughout, and everything having been done to avoid unnecessary labour to the housewife, we have still an extremely comfortable and artistic scheme of furnishing."<sup>35</sup>

The question of open spaces at the Buckhaven and Methil schemes was considered by the Housing Committee on May 18th 1921. After discussion, the Burgh Surveyor was instructed to prepare a sketch of two pieces of ground for recreation purposes on the Buckhaven site, and one recreation area for the Methil site.<sup>36</sup>

As has been shown, the housing scheme was thought to be a great success by the Town Council, and appeared to have been generally well received. By July 1921, however, a considerable problem had arisen concerning the rents of the houses. On May 2nd, the Town Council had agreed to the S.B.H.'s suggested increases in the rents, whereby a three-roomed house would be rented at £22, and £26 for a four-roomed house.<sup>37</sup>

On July 14th, a letter was published in The Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette, regarding the rents of the new houses. The letter stated that the rents decided upon by the Council were such that the working classes, with the reduction in wages then occurring, would be quite unable to pay. It was pointed out that:

"It is therefore no surprise to learn that quite a number of those who have been allocated houses have refused to become tenants solely, ... on the ground of inability to pay such high rents, and the prospect of a heavy increase in the rates."<sup>33</sup>

The author of the letter advised the Council to stop building any more houses, as there was certain to be a cessation of Government subsidies for house building, while building costs were falling, and further reductions in wages were likely. A further reason was given, which appears to have been somewhat misinformed, this being that the keen demand for housing accommodation had passed. It was also mentioned that there was likely to have been little increase in the population since 1911.<sup>34</sup>

The possibility of reducing the rents was subsequently under consideration for around eighteen months, with the result that on January 8th 1923, the Council approved a reduction agreed to by the S.B.H. The rents were to be £20, 10/- for three-apartment houses; £24, 10/- for four-apartment houses; and £27 for five-apartment houses; these to be retrospective as from Martinmas 1922.<sup>40</sup>

On September 5th 1921, it was agreed that the Town Council should protest against the action of the Government in abandoning the housing scheme. The Town Clerk was instructed to send a protest to Thomas Kennedy, the M.P. for Kirkcaldy Burghs.<sup>41</sup>

The Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette reported on January 12th 1922 that serious allegations had been made that the houses were not being built according to specification.<sup>42</sup> The following week, the above journal recorded that the allegations had been found to be wholly devoid of fact. The Chief Architect of the S.B.H., George W. MacNiven, had been called in to inspect the scheme, and was reported as stating that Buckhaven had:

"one of the finest housing schemes in Scotland."

The workmanship was said to be among the finest he had inspected throughout the Scottish housing schemes.<sup>43</sup>

On August 23rd 1922, it was reported to the Housing Committee that 181 houses were now occupied, and 69 were yet to be occupied. The Town Clerk was instructed to communicate with the architect and the clerk of works, to obtain from them a report as to the delay in the progress of the municipal housing scheme.<sup>44</sup>

#### The layout and the housing designs.

The housing scheme at Methil consisted of a sweeping crescent with an adjoining cul-de-sac, named Bayview Crescent. The Buckhaven scheme was somewhat larger, consisting of a number of crescents and avenues. Both schemes contained small areas set aside for trees and shrubs, and were planned at a density of approximately eleven houses to the acre, again conforming to Unwin's recommendation.

Of the various designs for the houses at both schemes, one type was characterised by a low sloping roof broken by a large central double gable. This house type bears a great similarity to Haxton's plan for Type C at Leven, which will be referred to later. The only apparent difference between the two designs is that Campbell's version had a completely straight, vertical side elevation, whereas Haxton's design featured a hipped roof.

Three of the house types were of a fairly similar, simplified design, having no gables or dormers to break the line of the roof. The two remaining types, however, both featured gables at either end. Of the latter types, one had projecting gables and a hipped roof; the gables of the other type were characterised by a small 'step' at either side, similar to those appearing in a certain design at Kirkcaldy.

In accordance with Garden City derived principles, the houses tended to be arranged in such a way as to provide variety. This was achieved by the combinations of different house types, thus avoiding the monotony of having

too great a number of identical house types together, and by the setting back of certain houses from the building line.

Further housing plans, 1923.

During 1923, a further housing scheme was planned, to deal with the insanitary areas of the burgh: the proposed houses were to be of a reduced standard of accommodation compared to the previous scheme. On April 18th, the Housing Committee recommended that the Burgh Surveyor should prepare plans for two and three roomed houses, with and without a bathroom.<sup>45</sup>

At a Special Meeting of the Town Council, held on May 21st, a letter was submitted from the S.B.H., regarding the scheme for the improvement of insanitary areas in the burgh. The Board was prepared to make an annual contribution, out of a pool of £5000, of £789 so far as it involved an annual loss of that amount. Regarding the remainder of the scheme, the Board would contribute £230 per annum provided this sum did not exceed half the estimated annual loss thereon. The above sums would be payable each year during the period of repayment of the loans obtained for the housing scheme.<sup>46</sup>

After discussion, the Council resolved to proceed with the proposed scheme of 100 houses as submitted to the S.B.H. 16 of these houses were to be built in Methil, 24 in Denbeath, and 60 in Buckhaven. All the houses were to be in blocks of eight, rather than of two and four houses as in the previous schemes.<sup>47</sup>

On June 4th, Thomas Brown, the Burgh Surveyor, was appointed as the architect for the scheme.<sup>48</sup> Later in the month, Brown submitted to the Works Committee a layout plan of the above houses, now to be on the two sites at Buckhaven and Methil. The Committee recommended that 60 houses should be built at Buckhaven, and 40 at Methil.<sup>49</sup>

Later in the year, on October 1st, the Council resolved that no subsidy should be given for tenement houses, presumably under the 1923 Housing Act, encouraging private enterprise.<sup>50</sup> On November 12th, a letter was submitted to the Council from the S.B.H., approving the type plan for the two-apartment houses for the Improvement of Insanitary Areas scheme.<sup>51</sup>



Footnotes.

1. Buckhaven and Methil Town Council Minutes, Housing Committee, Nov 18th 1918, minute submitted to Town Council, Dec 2nd 1918.
2. B.M.T.C.M., Housing Committee, Feb 17th 1919, Town Council, March 3rd.
3. B.M.T.C.M., Town Council, March 3rd 1919.
4. The Mail for Leven, Wemyss and East Fife, Feb 19th 1919, p.2.
5. Housing Committee report, dated March 24th.
6. Town Council, April 7th 1919.
7. Ibid, May 5th 1919.
8. Special Meeting of Town Council, May 14th 1919.
9. Town Council, July 7th 1919.
10. S.M.T.C., Sept 22nd 1919.
11. Town Council, Dec 1st 1919.
12. Ibid, Housing Committee report dated Nov 14th 1919.
13. Housing Committee, Dec 5th 1919.
14. Town Council, Jan 5th 1920.
15. Ibid, Feb 2nd 1920.
16. Ibid, June 7th 1920.
17. Idem.
18. S.M.T.C., June 21st 1920.
19. Idem.
20. Town Council, Nov 8th 1920.
21. The Mail for Leven, Wemyss and East Fife, June 16th 1920, p.3.
22. Ibid, July 7th 1920, p.3. Also, B.M.T.C.M., Town Council, July 5th 1920.
23. Town Council, Jan 10th 1921.
24. Town Council, Feb 7th 1921.
25. The Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette, March 10th 1921, p.3.
26. Town Council, April 4th 1921.
27. Idem.

28. Town Council, May 2nd 1921.
29. Idem.
30. The Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette, May 19th 1921, p.3.
31. Idem.
32. Idem.
33. Idem.
34. Idem.
35. Idem.
36. Town Council, June 6th 1921.
37. Ibid, May 2nd 1921.
38. The Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette, July 14th 1921, p.2.
39. Idem.
40. Town Council, Jan 8th 1923.
41. Ibid, Sept 5th 1921.
42. The Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette, Jan 12th 1922, p.3.
43. Ibid, Jan 19th 1922, p.2.
44. Town Council, Sept 4th 1922.
45. Ibid, May 7th 1923.
46. S.M.T.C., May 21st 1923.
47. Idem.
48. Town Council, June 4th 1923.
49. Ibid, July 2nd 1923.
50. Town Council, Oct 1st 1923.
51. Ibid, Nov 12th 1923.

## Chapter 15.

### The Scoonie Estate, Leven.

The possibility of a town planning scheme for the burgh of Leven was first mentioned at a meeting of the Town Council, held on December 2nd 1912, at which a letter, dated November 27th, was read from the landowner, R.M. Christie, of Durie.<sup>1</sup> Christie had decided to have a section of the ground immediately to the north of the burgh boundary brought under the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909, and asked the Council to take up the matter and to put the Act into force. He hoped to negotiate with the burgh authorities as to their possible acquisition of the beach, also a portion of ground for a public park.

During 1912-13, the Edinburgh architect Frank Mears prepared a sketch plan for Christie of the proposed town planning scheme, with Patrick Geddes as the consultant for the scheme.<sup>2</sup> Christie again wrote to Leven Town Council on November 24th 1913,<sup>3</sup> stressing that the only method of ensuring the future residential prosperity of Leven was to adopt a comprehensive plan such as that of Mears and Geddes, and that the Council must either adopt this plan or make a better one. The Council, however, decided to do nothing further in the meantime. The scheme was evidently abandoned, as seven years later, on September 21st 1920, The Mail for Kirkcaldy, Central and West Fife, in an article concerning the town planning of the burgh, mentioned that since the preparation of the above plan, no attempt had been made to put it into effect.<sup>4</sup>

By the end of 1913, however, the Council had agreed to town plan part of the burgh. On December 16th,<sup>5</sup> the Town Council approved the recommendation of the Housing Committee that the area to be town planned should extend:

"from Braehead Farm on the West, then north to the field north of Mount Fleurie, then east by the lade at Linnwood Hall, past the Broom on to Sillerhole, then south-east to Scoonie Bridge, then east to include the Ladies' Links and the Golf Links to the Mile Dyke; also to include the ground south of the Promenade Road, from Scoonie Burn to River Leven down to low water mark."<sup>6</sup>

Having decided to embark upon a municipal housing scheme, the Town Council, at a Special Meeting held on January 23rd 1919, agreed to fix on the site to the west of Scoonie High Road as the most suitable for building purposes, following the inspection of the possible sites. It was also agreed that the architects Alexander C. Dewar and Andrew D. Haxton be appointed to prepare a sketch plan of the ground for the housing scheme.<sup>7</sup>

The Mail for Leven, Wemyss and East Fife, however, objected strongly to the proposal for town planning the area, also to the appointment of Dewar. An article published on January 29th 1919 remarked:

"The alluring notion of the scheme is like a pretty bubble, pleasing to the eye of the Council, and without more ado the petition is going forward. What is everybody's business is nobody's business, so we expect no-one will oppose. So far as we can gather, town-planning is as useful as a fifth wheel to a coach."<sup>8</sup>

The journal suggested that the Council should send a deputation to any burghs where town planning was in force, to test from first-hand inquiries the worth of the scheme. It was believed that such a deputation would find that town planning caused more harm than good, by prohibiting any private buildings ventures.

The article pessimistically continued:

"All the calends at the present time portend to the death of individual enterprise in building: the municipalities are the builders of the future. It spells the elimination of the private architect, and the only man who can carry on will be the architect holding a municipal post."<sup>9</sup>

Referring to the appointment of Dewar, it was contended that "grossly unfairly" the Council had for years ignored other architects, giving every burghal job to their architect-Town Clerk, [Dewar], and that it would be

"monstrous" for this to be perpetuated under the Town Planning and Housing schemes. The journal therefore suggested that instead, the architects should be invited to submit competitive plans for the scheme. It would seem that the author of the article was unaware of the appointment of Haxton in addition to Dewar.

Dewar and Haxton's ground plan was approved by the Town Council on March 3rd 1919, whereupon the architects were instructed to submit the plan to the L.G.B.S. for approval.<sup>10</sup> Later that month, on March 20th,<sup>11</sup> the Housing Committee conferred with Christie regarding the proposed site. Christie stated that the feu duty would be £16 per acre and suggested that houses be erected on both sides of Scoonie High Road, any additional ground required being taken on the east side of this road. The Committee suggested that Christie should have a plan prepared by his architect showing his proposals, and submit this to the Council for consideration. This plan was subsequently recommended at a meeting of the above Committee held on April 4th,<sup>12</sup> on condition that sufficient drainage be made and that the ground between Scoonie Road and Waggon Road be left as a public park of around 14 acres, on terms which Christie would state. The feu duty, after much consideration, was later reduced to £8, 10/- per acre.<sup>13</sup>

On September 29th 1919, Dewar and Haxton submitted to the Town Council the layout plan and the six types of houses which had been approved by the S.B.H. for the housing scheme.<sup>14</sup> The scheme was to comprise 100 houses, and it was thus decided to adopt 22 three-apartment cottages; eight three-apartment houses with bedrooms on the first floor; 50 four-apartment houses with one bedroom on the ground floor and two on the first floor; 10 four-apartment houses with three bedrooms on the first floor; also 10 five apartment houses.

Haxton's layout plan for the scheme stated the net area as 9.4 acres, with a density of 8.5 houses per gross acre. The average garden ground per house was to be 390 square yards.<sup>15</sup> The layout was characterised by well

planned curving roads and crescents, thus creating an attractively designed estate, in accordance with the principles of design expressed by Unwin and other Garden City enthusiasts.

Further decisions were made at a meeting of the Housing Committee held on November 21st 1919,<sup>14</sup> at which it was agreed to recommend that the houses be lighted by electricity, and that gas should be provided for the cookers, also that the Committee should visit the exhibition at the S.B.H. offices in Edinburgh to select the baths, stoves, grates and other fittings. It was further agreed to advertise locally for loans for the housing scheme, at 5½%.

On November 5th 1919, The Mail for Leven, Wemyss and East Fife again viewed the future housing scheme with apprehension. The journal hoped that the Council would keep in view the suggestion of John Doyle, a candidate in the burgh's recent election, that four house blocks should be built rather than cottages and villas. Doyle believed that such blocks could be built more quickly and more cheaply than cottages. With regard to the proposed cottages, the article continued:

"Very little is known about the style of the cottages, but from what we gather they are to be a burlesque of the needs of the average working man's family. Can it be true that in one set of cottages there is a bedroom without a fireplace and so small that engineering was needed to find a space for a bed."<sup>15</sup>

The following week, the above journal reported that the Council's attention had been drawn to the proposed ceiling heights under the housing scheme. These heights were to be 8' 6", apparently one foot below the statutory height.<sup>16</sup> A week later, the journal referred to this as:

"a dive backwards which nothing can justify."<sup>17</sup>

On March 9th 1920, the Housing Committee decided to furnish 90 kitchen ranges in the living rooms of the three and four apartment houses, these being supplied by Messrs. Fraser and Walker of Edinburgh; also ten "Inter-Oven" grates in the living rooms of the five apartment houses.<sup>20</sup>

Although the housing scheme had already been planned, the town planning scheme had not yet been officially drawn up, therefore the Council formally resolved on March 8th 1920 to prepare a town planning scheme for the area of land in and adjoining the burgh, within the parish of Scoonie.<sup>21</sup> On August 18th of the same year, The Mail for Leven, Wemyss and East Fife reported that work had begun on the housing scheme during the previous week.<sup>22</sup>

As regards the financing of the housing scheme, the Council had difficulty in obtaining loans from private firms. On October 8th, however, the Public Works Loans Board informed the Council that they had resolved to grant a loan for the scheme not exceeding £21,000 to meet the probable expenditure for the ensuing six months, to be repaid with interest at 6%, by half yearly instalments.<sup>23</sup> The Council had previously estimated, however, that loans of £90,000 and £10,000 would be necessary for the housing and drainage work.

The following year, however, on November 22nd 1921, the S.B.H. informed the Town Council that they had recommended the Public Works Loans Board to advance £40,000 for the housing scheme.<sup>24</sup> At a Special Meeting held on December 28th 1921, the Council resolved to borrow a further £40,000, and authorised the execution of the necessary bonds for this loan, in terms of the Burgh Police (Scotland) Acts, 1892-1903.<sup>25</sup>

#### Progress during 1921.

On March 24th 1921, the Housing Committee considered the question of the rents for the housing scheme.<sup>26</sup> After comparing the rents for other housing schemes in and around Fife, the following prices were recommended: £20 for a two-storey, three-roomed house; £22 for a cottage type three-roomed house; £23 for a four-roomed house, and £26 for a five-roomed house.

These rents were agreed upon by the Town Council on April 4th, except for the three-roomed cottage type, which was altered to £21.<sup>27</sup>

The houses were to be let by the year, with no sub-letting. The tenant was bound to occupy the apartments and other accommodation of the house for the respective purposes for which they were designed. There was to be no overcrowding or misuse of any part of the house, no lodgers without the permission of the corporation, and no trade was to be carried out in the house. No additions or alterations were to be made to the houses without the permission of the Corporation; further rules stipulated that carpets should not be beaten after 9 a.m.; clothes were to be dried only at the back of the house, and poultry and pigeons were not to be kept without the Corporation's permission.<sup>28</sup>

The S.B.H. however, disagreed with the proposed rents. On June 10th, the Board wrote to the Council, enclosing a report from their housing inspector, and recommended that the rents should be increased as follows:- For a three-apartment, two storey cottage, £22; for a three-apartment single storey cottage, £23; for a four-apartment cottage £26; and £29 for a five apartment cottage.<sup>29</sup> The Clerk made further enquiries concerning rents in the surrounding area,<sup>30</sup> after consideration of which it was finally resolved to agree to the rents as suggested by the S.B.H.<sup>31</sup>

By March 1921, the scheme was evidently well under way. The Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette reported on March 10th that Baillie Rolland had informed the Council that a fortnight previously the chief architect of the S.B.H. had visited the housing scheme. The architect had written to the Town Clerk, stating that he was:

"very much taken with the appearance of the scheme in general, ... the workmanship on the whole was very satisfactory."<sup>32</sup>

At a meeting of the Housing Committee held on May 16th 1921, it was decided that the opening ceremony for the housing scheme was to be held on



Thursday May 26th at 5.30 p.m. The Clerk was instructed to send invitations to the members and officials of the Council, the Provost and Town Clerk of Buckhaven, the Chairman and Clerk of the Parish Council, also the County Education Authority.<sup>33</sup>

The opening ceremony was reported in The Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette on June 2nd 1921.<sup>34</sup> The scheme had been opened in the presence of a large crowd of spectators, and in an introductory speech, Provost Somerville congratulated the architects, Dewar and Haxton, for giving the burgh "a housing scheme which was pre-eminently good."<sup>35</sup>

Bailie Rolland then explained that the housing scheme was the largest undertaking the local authority had ever embarked upon. Recognising that many people objected to the principle of subsidised houses, he argued that the scarcity of houses in the burgh was not likely to be met by private enterprise, and that it was in the interests of the health of the burgh and of its industrial life to take advantage of the Government scheme.

Rolland further explained that, despite criticisms in the Press regarding the financial obligations of the scheme, the liability of the ratepayers was 4/5 of a penny in the pound, which, for most of the ratepayers in Leven, would amount to just one shilling per annum. He therefore believed that they would agree that a housing scheme with a municipal bowling green was well worth that call on the local rates.

Rolland later pointed out that through his own business he was identified with a great many housing schemes in various parts of the county; consequently, he was of opinion that there was no scheme that could compare with Leven's layout and the types of houses, and that great credit was due to their architects and officials. He stated that the Council had arranged for 100 houses, however, the demand was such that it might be possible to make a case for a further 50 houses. He further recommended that the field opposite the scheme should be acquired for a recreation park.<sup>36</sup>

### The house type designs.

Of all the post-war housing schemes dealt with here, Leven's Scoonie Estate most strongly demonstrates the application of Garden City principles to housing design and layout. The density of the houses, at 8.5 per acre, came well below Unwin's recommended maximum of 12 houses per acre. Considerable attention was paid to the provision of open spaces, the central feature of the scheme being the bowling green, around which the houses were grouped in curving roads and crescents.

Whereas all the other schemes included many houses in four house blocks, the Scoonie Estate consisted entirely of semi-detached houses. Type L, a block of two single storey houses of three apartments, contained a living room, two bedrooms, a bathroom and scullery; Type E, the remaining three apartment type, a two storey house, contained a living room and scullery on the ground floor, with two bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor. 37

Three types of four apartment houses were designed, Types B, C and D, all of which were two storey cottages. Type B contained a living room, scullery and bathroom on the ground floor with three bedrooms on the first floor. The accommodation of Type C was similar to the above, except that the bathroom was on the first floor, one bedroom being situated on the ground floor. 38 The dominant feature of both types B and C was a central double gable, in the latter type the gable extended to the top of the roof, the roof itself coming down to the top of the lower storey, thus emphasising the height of the gable.

The five roomed type, Type G, contained a living room, a parlour with a bay window, and a scullery on the ground floor, with three bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor. Above each bay window, the roof line was broken by a gabled dormer window. 39

On January 9th 1922, the Housing Committee decided to name the principal street of the scheme 'Scoonie Drive', the shorter street to the north 'Scoonie Terrace', and the road around the bowling green, 'Scoonie Crescent'.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the apparent success of the housing scheme, however, the housing shortage in the Leven area remained a problem as was shown by an article which appeared in The Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette on April 13th 1922.<sup>41</sup> The journal reported that Robert J. Wigston, Leven's Sanitary Inspector, had circulated his report for 1921 among members of the Council. Wigston's report was then quoted at length. Apparently ten new houses had been completed during the year under the Government scheme. The plumbing and drainage work of the houses had been smoke tested and found to be satisfactory.

The main point of Wigston's report was that the problem of slum property remained untouched by the housing scheme:

"It is quite evident from the class of people who have obtained the houses under the Government scheme, that the scheme is not in the slightest degree going to help us by getting the tenants out of the undesirable dwellings. The fact is that the people in these slum areas cannot afford to pay the rents asked for the new houses, and the new houses are too big for this class of tenant."<sup>42</sup>

Wigston acknowledged that open spaces around the houses were desirable, however, he stressed that the class of people for whom the houses were originally intended were being debarred by economic conditions from obtaining them. He added, on the other hand, that a good number of the people living in the slum areas were not altogether desirable as tenants for new property.

The application of the Housing Acts as regards slum property was hampered by the difficulty in obtaining sanitary houses for the people to remove into, as Wigston explained:

"it is useless to carry out the statutory procedure as we could not literally put the people on the street by serving closing orders."<sup>43</sup>

It was evident that there was a great demand for suitable property to enable the authorities to deal with this problem.

Additional houses, 1922-23.

During 1922, it was proposed to build additional houses in Leven under the "Improvement of Insanitary Areas" scheme. On July 7th, at a Special Meeting of the Town Council, a letter was read from the solicitors Smith and Grant, on behalf of Christie, regarding the feu-duty he proposed to charge for the ground required for building these houses.<sup>44</sup> Christie proposed that the ground along the roads which were to be made parallel with the railway, and along the Waggon Road should be set aside for flatted houses at a density of 20 houses per acre, and that the feu-duty for this ground should not exceed £25 per acre. The Council, however, voted that the maximum rate be £15 per acre.<sup>45</sup>

The S.B.H. had originally allocated a grant of £30,000 to the Leven local authority, which the Council did not regard as being nearly enough for the building required. On June 1st 1923, the Town Clerk, Alexander C. Dewar, also the architect for the housing scheme, informed the housing secretary of the S.B.H. that:

"The scheme, as submitted, was prepared with great care and was considered the minimum that was necessary for this Burgh, and my Council are quite unable to understand how the Burgh of Leven has been treated on a different basis from the other Burghs in the County, as is evident by the Grants allocated to them"<sup>46</sup>

With the help of the M.P. for East Fife, Duncan Millar, an agreement was reached between the Council and the S.B.H. for a two year programme of 60 houses, and the closure and demolition of a corresponding number of insanitary houses.<sup>47</sup>

In September 1923,<sup>48</sup> offers were submitted for the additional houses, these were to be two-roomed flatted houses, of types H and J, certainly

marking a reduction in accommodation from the types designed for the initial housing scheme. The following month, in connection with the 1923 Housing Act, it was decided to offer subsidies to private builders for houses of two, three and four apartments, at a rate of £100 per house. To further encourage private building, the Council was to advertise this resolution, stating that it hoped to offer ground for sites at a cheap rate.<sup>43</sup>

Footnotes.

1. Leven Town Council Minutes, Town Council, Dec 2nd 1912.
2. P. Geddes, Cities in Evolution, London, 1915, p.390.
3. L.T.C.M., Town Council, Dec 1st 1913.
4. The Mail for Kirkcaldy, Central and West Fife, Sept 21st 1920, p.1.
5. L.T.C.M., Special Meeting of Town Council, Dec 16th 1918.
6. L.T.C.M., Housing Committee, Dec 2nd 1918.
7. L.T.C.M., S.M.T.C., Jan 23rd 1919.
8. The Mail for Leven, Wemyss and East Fife, Jan 29th 1919, p.2.
9. Idem.
10. L.T.C.M., Town Council, March 3rd 1919.
11. L.T.C.M., Housing Committee, March 20th 1919.
12. Ibid, April 4th 1919.
13. L.T.C.M., Town Council, Sept 1st 1919.
14. L.T.C.M., S.M.T.C., Sept 29th 1919.
15. Haxton's layout plan, National Monuments Record of Scotland collection.
16. L.T.C.M., Housing Committee, Nov 21st 1919.
17. The Mail for Leven, Wemyss and East Fife, Nov 5th 1919, p.2.
18. Ibid, Nov 12th 1919, p.2.
19. Ibid, Nov 19th 1919, p.2.
20. L.T.C.M., Housing Committee, March 9th 1920.
21. L.T.C.M., S.M.T.C., March 8th 1920.
22. The Mail for Leven, Wemyss and East Fife, Aug 18th 1920, p.2.
23. L.T.C.M., S.M.T.C., Oct 15th 1920.
24. Ibid, Nov 28th 1921.
25. Ibid, Dec 28th 1921.
26. L.T.C.M., Housing Committee, March 24th 1921.
27. L.T.C.M., Town Council, April 4th 1921.
28. Idem.
29. L.T.C.M., S.M.T.C., June 16th 1921.

30. L.T.C.M., Housing Committee, Sept 1st 1921.
31. L.T.C.M., Town Council, Sept 5th 1921.
32. Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette, March 10th 1921, p.2.
33. L.T.C.M., Housing Committee, May 16th 1921.
34. Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette, June 2nd 1921, p.3.
35. Idem.
36. Idem.
37. Haxton plans, National Monuments Record of Scotland collection.
38. Idem.
39. Idem.
40. L.T.C.M., Housing Committee, Jan 9th 1922.
41. Leven Advertiser and Wemyss Gazette, April 13th 1922, p.3.
42. Idem.
43. Idem.
44. L.T.C.M., S.M.T.C., July 7th 1922.
45. Idem.
46. Letter dated June 1st 1923.
47. L.T.C.M., Housing Sub-Committee, July 30th 1923.
48. L.T.C.M., S.M.T.C., Sept 24th 1923.
49. Ibid, Oct 12th 1923.

## Chapter 16.

### Summary and Conclusion.

To what extent then, were Garden City values implemented in Fife between 1914 and 1923? As has been repeatedly emphasised, Rosyth was by far the most important attempt in Fife to create a Garden City inspired community, and indeed is generally recognised to be the major such experiment in Scotland. As the preceding documentation has shown, the difficulties which affected the creation of Rosyth certainly highlighted the problem of transforming Howard's somewhat idealistic vision into a practical venture.

It had been hoped, from the very beginning, that Rosyth would mark a new departure for Scottish housing, breaking away from the traditional urban tenement system, with its characteristic grid-iron planning and its tendency to gross overcrowding; and organised instead according to Garden City principles. The construction of the new dockyard, in the then totally undeveloped area of Rosyth, thus provided an excellent opportunity for such a venture. The Scottish branch of the Garden City Association evidently played a vital role in pressurising the relevant authorities to take action in the matter. Without this continued pressure, it is possible that, as was indeed feared, Rosyth might instead have been developed by speculative builders and along more traditional lines.

The major problem which hindered the development of Rosyth has been revealed to have been the reluctance of both the L.G.B.S. and the Admiralty to take responsibility for the building of houses, this resulting in a delay of four to five years. By the time this question was settled, with the Housing Act of 1914 placing the responsibility firmly with the L.G.B.S., the housing situation had already become a serious cause for concern.



The conditions of accommodation around Rosyth, also the growing feelings of impatience with the situation, have already been described in detail. At this point it is, however, interesting to refer to certain statements made in the House of Commons on March 16th 1914, during a lengthy debate concerning the question of responsibility for the housing at Rosyth.

Lord Robert Cecil quoted a description recently given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, referring to British rural housing conditions:

"The housing is atrocious, inadequate, insufficient, insanitary, rotten."

Although believing this to be an exaggeration of the general state of the rural housing of the country, Cecil continued:

"if he had been speaking of the housing conditions at Rosyth, I should not have quarrelled with the right hon. Gentleman's description."

Concerning the lack of progress at Rosyth, he concluded that:

"there never was brought before the House of Commons a clearer or more scandalous neglect of obviously official duty."

The situation having been allowed to deteriorate this far, it is not surprising that by the time building was finally able to commence, the major consideration was to build the necessary houses as quickly as possible, to alleviate the severe housing shortage. By this time, of course, the war had broken out, resulting in a growing shortage of building materials and labour. It is probable that had the venture been fully approved from the beginning, thereby allowing the development of the town to begin well before the outbreak of war, more attention could have been paid to the construction of the houses, leaving less grounds for later complaints from the tenants.

The recognition of the severity of the situation at Rosyth was certainly a major influence on the passing of the 1914 Housing Acts, the first of which gave the L.G.B. the responsibility for housing Government

employees in areas where sufficient accommodation was not available. The provisions of this Act foreshadowed the legislation of 1919, which for the first time made the provision of housing the duty of local authorities rather than simply a voluntary undertaking.

It must be recalled that the delays prior to the passing of the 1914 Housing Act were further exacerbated by a widespread tendency to assume that Dunfermline Town Council's proposed town planning scheme would solve the problem of the housing at Rosyth. The provision of housing was quite separate to the drawing up of a town-planning scheme, yet the Admiralty refused to build houses on the grounds that Dunfermline had undertaken to prepare the town-planning scheme for the area. As has been shown, the Garden City Association made a strong point of clarifying this misapprehension.

The second major problem affecting Rosyth concerned the complications regarding the tramways. Among other difficulties, the altered tramway route delayed the submission of the town planning scheme to the L.G.B.S., and left the S.N.H.Co.Ltd. unable to comply with the scheme. Since L.G.B. regulations stipulated that any buildings interfering with a town planning scheme were liable to be removed without compensation, the difficulties which ensued made it necessary for an Emergency Bill to be submitted to Parliament. Consequently the Housing (Rosyth Dockyard) Act was passed in 1915, to facilitate the immediate erection of houses.

When the houses were finally built, an emphasis was placed on designing the houses so as to conform to the requirements of the great influx of English workmen, and indeed, many of the earlier designs bore a resemblance to English vernacular cottages. Although the Garden City Movement is frequently associated with a tendency towards self-contained or semi-detached cottages, a large number of the Rosyth houses were planned as long blocks of eight to ten houses. This arrangement also occurred in many designs at Hampstead Garden Suburb, some of which were by Unwin. Mottram

had, of course, worked with Unwin at Letchworth and Hampstead, and can be presumed to have been strongly influenced by his principles of design.

As a greater emphasis on economy became necessary, many of the later designs at Rosyth became more simplified; indeed a certain amount of pressure was exerted on the Housing Company to pay less attention to architectural effect, and more to the provision of suitable internal accommodation. The simplification of the designs may not, however, have been entirely due to economic necessity. As has been pointed out in Chapter 1, (p.26-27), and as will be shown later, a strong body of pre-war opinion favoured a more rationalised, standardised form of housing design than what was identified as "romanticised" Garden City prototypes.

It is also evident that although named "Rosyth Garden City", Rosyth is more accurately described as a "Garden Village". Here reference should be made to Howard's own definitions. According to these a Garden Village depended on a neighbouring city for water, light and drainage;<sup>4</sup> this was the case with Rosyth, which depended upon Dunfermline for such services. Garden Villages, as described by Howard, were the centre of only one major industry.<sup>5</sup> Conforming to this description, Rosyth was built purely for the employees of the dockyard, and their families.

To determine how far Rosyth conformed to (or departed from) Garden City principles, it is useful to refer to E.G. Culpin's "Essentials of a Garden City" contained in his booklet The Garden City Movement up to date of 1913. Culpin's first point was that before any building commenced, the town should be properly planned with a view to the convenience of the community as a whole, the preservation of natural beauty, the securing of the utmost degree of healthfulness, and proper regard to communication with the surrounding district.<sup>6</sup> From this point of view, it can be observed that the town plan for Rosyth had certainly been carefully prepared before any building commenced; although numerous difficulties had already prevented the scheme's approval. In designing the town plan, Wilkes certainly

attempted to conform to the above principles, but the fact that building was allowed to commence before the approval of the town plan, and that it became a major requirement to build the houses as quickly as possible, meant that the town as constructed was not as satisfactory as had been hoped, a point clearly demonstrated by the third development of 1000 houses, built on a low-lying area subject to severe flooding. Nor, indeed, was "the utmost degree of healthfulness" secured, witness the 1919 medical report pointing out great inadequacies in the sanitary conditions of the town. As regards communication with the surrounding district, Rosyth was linked to Inverkeithing and Dunfermline by both rail and road, the railway running along the outskirts of the town.

Culpin's second point was that the number of houses to the acre should be strictly limited, so that each dwelling should have ample light and air, a suitable garden, and that there should be generous provision of open spaces and recreation grounds. The density of houses was indeed limited, at an average of 12.6 per acre, closely approximating Unwin's recommended maximum of 12 houses per acre. Each house was provided with a garden, a greater innovation in Scottish housing than in English, and the centre of the town contained a large recreation area, with further open spaces and allotments provided.

The third point was that the town should be permanently surrounded by a belt of agricultural and park land, with the rural portion occupying the larger part of the estate. Here again an important qualification should be placed on the realisation of such ideals at Rosyth, where it was never intended that land should be purchased specifically for agricultural purposes.

Culpin's fourth point was that the return on capital should be limited to around 5%, any further profit being applied to the estate itself for the benefit of the community. This principle was complied with to a certain extent, the profits of the S.N.H.Co. Ltd. were limited to 5%, any excess

could indeed be put back into the housing scheme. On the other hand, it was possible for such profits to be used instead for any other schemes undertaken by the Company.

Culpin's final point was that the town should not be merely residential, but also commercial and industrial; and that the workers' cottages should be at a convenient distance from their work. The sole purpose of Rosyth was, of course, the dockyard, and the residential area was indeed at a reasonable distance from the dockyard itself.

As regards the layout of Rosyth, the town does not give the appearance of having been designed to any dominant pattern, also the tendency to the "rond point" as shown in Wilkes' town plan is not evident in the layout as it actually occurred. The town was characterised by many curving roads, also the feature much favoured by Unwin, the cul-de-sac. This form of layout nevertheless marked a distinct change from that of traditional Scottish towns.

Reaffirming its status as a Garden Village rather than a Garden City, the town does not appear to have been designed with the intention of catering for all classes. The houses, all of three, four and five rooms, were to accommodate mainly the skilled artisan and lower middle classes. The lower class of workmen, who had formed the temporary population at Rosyth, had simply been housed in the "village" of tin huts erected by the contractors. It was not until 1925 that serious attempts were made to remove these huts, which had indeed become a source of embarrassment, as was pointed out by the July 1925 issue of Garden Cities and Town Planning. The article explained that:

"It has long been a source of worry and dissatisfaction to Dunfermline Town Council that, side by side with a model town, there should be an agglomeration of primitive dwellings, in which, for lack of more suitable accommodation, servants of a Government department have been forced to live."

A major difficulty which faced Letchworth as a Garden City was that its houses proved to be too expensive for the working classes. As has been shown, this problem resulted in the Cheap Cottages Exhibition of 1905, which again did not succeed in its aim to find means of providing well designed cottages with sufficient accommodation at a maximum of £150 each. The problem was by no means confined to Letchworth. Although a major aspect of the Garden City Movement was to provide greatly improved housing accommodation for the working classes, at affordable rents, this ideal proved to be extremely difficult to put into practice. At Rosyth, despite the growing emphasis on economy, and the fact that Mottram claimed to have given the question of rent the highest priority, the houses again proved to be too expensive for many of the tenants. Indeed, as the above journal mentioned, some families had had to leave the houses at Rosyth to live instead in the tin huts.<sup>6</sup> The Rosyth rent strike of 1919, during which many tenants refused to pay what were considered to be unaffordable rents, further highlighted this problem.

Despite its generally acknowledged generative importance, Rosyth can thus be seen to have constituted a distinctly limited response to the ideals of the Garden City Movement, and was certainly prevented from reaching its full potential by the many practical problems referred to above. On a wider scale, these problems demonstrate that Howard's original vision of a Garden City was extremely difficult to put into practice. Nevertheless, despite not having succeeded in all aspects, the design of Rosyth was to have a certain, if limited, influence on later housing schemes in Fife.

Apart from the Tudor Walters Report, which was by far the major source of guidance for local authorities in post-war housing schemes, certain publications were issued by the L.G.B.S. specifically for the guidance of Scottish local authorities. The report of the Women's Housing Sub-Committee appointed by the L.G.B.S., has already been dealt with, and detailed the

Committee's visits to various housing schemes under the Board's supervision, including Rosyth. In July 1918, prior to the above report and to the Scottish architectural competition, a Memorandum by the L.G.B.S. with suggestions in regard to the provision and planning of houses for the working classes was published. The suggestions in the memorandum were explained to be largely the outcome of the experience gained by the Board's staff during the previous two to three years in connection with the provision of housing for Government employees on behalf of the Admiralty and the Ministry of Munitions. Since Rosyth was the largest L.G.B.S. housing scheme, it is most surprising that no reference was made to it in the memorandum.

The recommendations of the memorandum were highly similar to those of all the other reports dealt with previously. The five suggested house plans nevertheless showed a much greater emphasis on a vernacular cottage-like appearance, with more attention to details than had been apparent in the plans included in the corresponding publication by the English L.G.B. The designs, however, did not express a recognisably Scottish vernacular style. Indeed, with the possible exception of one house-type at Kirkcaldy, no attempt appears to have been made to preserve Scottish vernacular features in any of the post-war housing schemes discussed. The designs were generally derived from English cottage types. A possible reason for this is that, certainly at Rosyth, and perhaps at other L.G.B.S. schemes, the houses were designed to cater for a large influx of English employees; thus, having been built according to a more recognisably English than Scottish design, these houses then formed the basis for the L.G.B.S.'s recommendations for post-war housing.

Although Rosyth was never mentioned, the memorandum included four photographs of houses built at Gourock for the Admiralty. The layout of the streets, and the designs of the houses, bore a striking resemblance to those of Rosyth. One of these houses inspired the Board's recommended

'Type C', and was identical to Greig and Fairbairn's 'Type B' for Rosyth, of 1915. The L.G.B.S.'s suggested version of this type for local authorities was similar both externally and internally to the Rosyth Type B. The only difference was that the bath and w.c. were to be in a separate apartment next to the scullery, rather than simply leading off from the scullery. A number of Rosyth houses were of the latter arrangement, which was later criticised by the L.G.B.S.'s Women's Housing Sub-Committee. Moreover, the above L.G.B.S. Memorandum specifically recommended that entrance to the bathroom should be obtained directly off a passage and not through the living room or scullery.

A further point suggested by the L.G.B.S., which again appears to demonstrate the "negative" influence of Rosyth, was that coom ceilings were to be reduced to the minimum. This feature had been strongly disliked by many of the Rosyth tenants, as was shown by their many protests.

In the case of the post-war housing campaign, difficulties of providing suitable working-class housing, already signalled at Rosyth, were greatly exacerbated by shortages of materials and labour. The various Government housing reports were, almost without exception, derivative of the more accessible principles of Garden City design. Unwin, as a major contributor to the Tudor Walters Report, proved to be the critical linking figure between the original Garden City Movement and the planning of state-assisted housing schemes. The influence of Unwin is particularly noticeable in the emphasis on air, sunlight, low-density housing, and demands for a more straightforward form of design, without back projections.

As has been repeatedly demonstrated, the Fife local authority schemes described in this thesis encapsulate a significant, if limited, response to Garden City principles. The major feature of all the schemes described is a low density of the housing, particularly if compared with existing surrounding developments. Low density housing was doubtlessly the most influential aspect of Garden City design, although this indeed had not been



a specifically detailed aspect of Howard's Garden City, rather a principle popularised by Unwin. Garden City-derived methods of layout can be seen repeatedly in the schemes analysed, notably the use of curving roads and crescents, with houses set well back from the road to achieve a less monotonous building line, and the provision of trees and open spaces in addition to gardens attached to each house. Of the various housing schemes discussed, Leven's Scoonie Estate embodies the most "successful" layout, significantly incorporating an extremely low density of houses, (8.5 to the acre).

It perhaps scarcely needs emphasising that none of these post-war schemes could be described as Garden Suburbs or even, indeed, Garden Villages, the scale of the developments being far too small. The size of the schemes nevertheless varied considerably; Dunfermline's Brucefield estate, for example, comprised no fewer than nine roads, whereas the Inverkeithing scheme consisted of one. Inverkeithing Town Council indeed showed the least response to the recommendations of the Government reports, as was shown by their strong intention to build a proportion of two-roomed houses.

The Government housing scheme, despite its large scale, has been shown to have been aimed at a fairly small section of society, leaving the problems of a broad spectrum of the working classes virtually untouched. Indeed, the problem of providing suitable accommodation at affordable rents, while still providing a sufficient return as to be economically satisfactory, again occurred, this time to an even greater degree. This can be seen particularly well in the case of Kirkcaldy, where there was a distinct difference between the earlier more innovative house designs and the simpler, more austere plan subsequently recommended by the S.B.H. Mainly for reasons of economy, the S.B.H. later placed an increasing emphasis on standardisation, and recommended a certain lowering of

standards in the quality of accommodation provided. Yet again, many tenants had been unable to afford the rents demanded for the new houses.

When considering the impact of Garden City ideals in Fife, it is essential to bear in mind the fact that the standard of housing in Scotland was far worse than in England. The findings of the 1917 Royal Commission fully demonstrated for the first time the severity and the extent of the Scottish housing problem, making clear the need for immediate reform. The tenement system was indeed found to be wholly undesirable.

As was mentioned in Chapter 10, the Tudor Walters Report made the point that the provision of three-roomed houses in Scotland would mark a greater advance in accommodation than would that of four-roomed houses in England. It is thus important to note that, at least in the earlier post-war housing schemes, the S.B.H. refused to sanction houses containing fewer than three rooms, an attempt not only being made simply to provide houses, but to significantly raise the standard of Scottish working class housing.

The findings of this thesis would thus appear to support the contention that Howard's ideal of abolishing the problems of congested cities and rural depopulation was simply too vast and ambitious to be carried into practice; indeed, the housing schemes were generally reduced in scale from their original proposals, thus scarcely touching the surface of the worst housing problems. The slums still remained, with their inhabitants unable to afford the new council house rents. Furthermore, clearance schemes were hindered by the lack of available houses for people who could have been removed from the demolished houses.

It is generally accepted that economic reasons were the major cause for the increasing emphasis on standardisation in house design, but a further aspect was undoubtedly the growing reaction against the "romanticised" nature of Garden City planning. Two articles from the Town Planning Review of 1916 demonstrate this attitude, which was indeed to have a marked influence on the later development of Scottish municipal housing.

In an article entitled "The Standard Cottage", S.D. Adshead contended that organisation was essential to the success of the modern nation, and also of the modern community. Within limits, he believed that there should be a certain uniformity in the appearance of cottages. While warning against such excessive standardisation as to entirely eliminate any individuality, Adshead stressed that:

"The standard cottage is an essential appendage of a highly organised social system, and without it we cannot have that which lies at the very root of national efficiency, organisation, and economy."<sup>2</sup>

The increasingly reductive design of post-war municipal houses was foreshadowed by Adshead's contention that:

"An essential condition of the plan and elevation of a standard cottage is that it be elemental and simple in form. Here there is no room for corners, no room for features that only lean against the mass, and perhaps most important of all, no room for detail of peculiar interest: detail which might be a pleasure to look at once, but which continually repeated would be like the constant repetition of an irritating catchphrase."<sup>3</sup>

Adshead concluded that:

"It would be well if with all the cottages that it is absolutely essential be built in the near future, those responsible for their erection give consideration to the adoption of standard designs."<sup>4</sup>

An article by Lionel Budden, entitled "The Standardisation of Elements of Design in Domestic Architecture", also advocated the use of standardised components and designs for houses, with an emphasis on a return to a more 'Classical' approach to design. Budden wrote:

"In place of the little rustic deserts created by the Garden City amateurs, congeries of buildings 'all different and all damned', we should have charming, ordered arrangements whose gentle formality would be expressive of a lucid ideal. Our suburbs would no longer ape a bucolic incoherence on the one hand, nor on the other lapse into mechanical dreariness."<sup>5</sup>

This advocacy of rationalised, standardised housing design foreshadowed the decline of the original "Garden City" form of architecture, derived from traditional vernacular cottages, and was no

doubt an important factor in the increasing austerity of post-war municipal housing schemes.

Footnotes.

1. Parliamentary Debates, March 16th 1914, vol lix, col 1716.
2. Idem.
3. Ibid. col 1718.
4. Howard's definitions are quoted in E.G. Culpin, The Garden City Movement up to date, 1913.
5. Idem.
6. Culpin, op.cit., p.5.
7. Garden Cities and Town Planning, vol xv, no. 7, July 1925, p.183.
8. Idem.
9. S.D. Adshead, "The Standard Cottage", in Town Planning Review. vol vi, no.4, April 1916, p.245.
10. Ibid. p. 249.
11. Idem.
12. L.B. Budden, "The Standardisation of Elements of Design in Domestic Architecture", in Town Planning Review, vol vi, no.4, April 1916, p.243.

Appendix 1.

Grieg, Fairbairn and Mottram, biographical details.

Alfred Greig, 1870 - c.1947.

Greig's nomination papers for Licentiatehip of the R.I.B.A., dated March 16th, 1911, and his entry in Who's Who in Architecture, of 1914, detail his career prior to Rosyth as follows:

In 1885, at the age of fifteen, Greig commenced a five year apprenticeship with the Edinburgh architects, Thornton, Shells? and Thomson. He completed his apprenticeship with the Edinburgh architect Frank Worthington Simon, and was afterwards engaged as an assistant to Sir R. Rowand Anderson for seven to eight years.

Grieg attended the School of Applied Art, Edinburgh, and was awarded a Travelling Scholarship and Diploma. In 1896, he was appointed teacher of architecture at the above institution, later becoming the principal teacher until the School was taken over by the Edinburgh College of Art.

In 1898, Greig commenced practice as an architect, and in 1903 assumed as partners Walter Fairbairn and George D. Macniven. Thereafter, Greig practiced under the firm Greig, Fairbairn and Macniven, of 31 York Place, Edinburgh.

His works included the Public Libraries at Motherwell, Whitehaven, and Bonnyrigg, all designed in open competition and in collaboration with Fairbairn and Macniven. In collaboration with Andrew Muirhead, and again in competition, Greig designed the Carnegie Public Baths at Dunfermline. He also designed a school at Bonnyrigg and a staircase at Kippenross House, Dunblane.

Further works, all in collaboration with Fairbairn and Macniven, were the Parish Council Offices at Bonnyrigg, Midlothian; churches in the Highlands for the United Free Church of Scotland at Alvie, Brora, Rogart,

Bruan, Kinloch, Muir of Ord, Tobermory, Glen Urquhart, Strathy, Lochs, Rosehall and Aultbea. These churches were again designed in open competition.

Walter Fairbairn, 1877 - c.1940.

Fairbairn's nomination papers for Licentiatehip of the R.I.B.A., dated March 17th 1911, and his entry in Who's Who in Architecture of 1914, detail his career prior to Rosyth as follows:

Similarly to Greig, Fairbairn studied at the School of Applied Art, Edinburgh. In 1892, he started his apprenticeship with Messrs. George Beattie and Sons. In 1896, he became a junior assistant with Frank W. Simon for one year, in 1897 he began work as a junior assistant with Sir R. Rowand Anderson with whom he worked for two years. He became an assistant to Messrs. Leadbetter and Fairley in 1899, again for two years.

In 1901, Fairbairn was awarded the R.I.B.A. Tite Prize, and became the head assistant to Sir R. Rowand Anderson for eighteen months, before starting in practice as an architect in 1903, with Greig and Macniven. Fairbairn taught architecture at the Lauder Technical School, Dunfermline, under the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust, for five years; and was in charge of a sketching and measuring class for four years, in connection with the Edinburgh College of Art. His works, in collaboration with Greig and Macniven, were as listed above.

Alfred Hugh Mottram, F.R.I.B.A. 1886 - 1953.

Mottram's nomination papers for Associateship of the R.I.B.A., dated August 11th 1911, and various obituaries, (R.I.B.A. Journal, vol 60, April 1953; The Builder, March 20th 1953, p.472; The Scotsman, March 13th 1953; Edinburgh Evening News, March 13th 1953; and the Eastern Evening News, March 14th 1953) record his career as follows:

On March 31st, 1903, Mottram was articled for three years to George Faulkner Armitage of Altrincham, with whom he remained for a further year. In 1907, he became a Clerk of the Works on the Martineau Memorial Hall, Norwich, before becoming an assistant to Raymond Unwin in June 1907. He spent three years with Unwin, during which time he worked at Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Mottram passed the R.I.B.A. Preliminary in June 1908, took first prize in University College evening classes in architecture in June 1909, and travelled in Normandy and Switzerland.

In 1912, Mottram commenced practice as an architect in Cardiff, where he was responsible for the housing designs and the layout of a number of Garden Villages and Suburbs, at Rhubina, Cardiff and Caerphilly. Three years later, he moved to Edinburgh to begin work at Rosyth.

Mottram was later known as a pioneer of steel and concrete houses, and was one of the first architects of the Scottish Special Housing Association, which took over the Scottish National Housing Company. He was also responsible for numerous housing schemes in Glasgow and the West of Central Scotland, Dundee, Edinburgh and other Scottish burghs. Other works included banks for the Clydesdale and North of Scotland Bank, brewery and public house work for Messrs. Thomas Usher, Edinburgh, and others, also a variety of private housing, commercial and industrial work.

Mottram became a planning consultant to the royal burghs of Forfar and Jedburgh, and was engaged with Sir Frank Mears on planning surveys for the county of Peebles. He designed illustrations for Unwin's Town Planning in Practice, and various other architectural works.



## Appendix 2.

### Definitions of Garden Cities, Suburbs and Villages.

Ewart G. Culpin, in his booklet The Garden City Movement up to date, published in 1913, referred to the many distorted ideas concerning Garden Cities, and the resulting confusion between Garden Cities, Garden Suburbs and Garden Villages.' To clarify the matter, he quoted Howard's definitions as follows:

1. "A 'Garden City' is a self-contained town, industrial, agricultural, residential - planned as a whole - and occupying land sufficient to provide garden-surrounded homes for at least 30,000 persons, as well as a wide belt of open fields. It combines the advantages of town and country, and prepares the way for a national movement, stemming the tide of the population now leaving the countryside and sweeping into our over-crowded cities."
2. "A 'Garden Suburb' provides that the normal growth of existing cities shall be on healthy lines; and, when such cities are not already too large, such suburbs are most useful, and even in the case of overgrown London they may be, though on the other hand they tend to drive the country yet further afield, and do not deal with the root evil - rural depopulation."
3. "'Garden Villages', such as Bourneville and Port Sunlight, are Garden Cities in miniature, but depend upon some neighbouring city for water, light and drainage; they have not the valuable provision of a protective belt, and are usually the centre of one great industry only."

Culpin later referred to the design by Mottram, illustrating the Garden City principle applied to Suburbs. This design, dated July 1912, and mistakenly attributed by Culpin to Unwin, also appeared in Nothing Gained by Overcrowding, and was possibly designed while Mottram was working as an assistant to Unwin. The illustration shows a distinctly formal layout, with the suburbs strictly separated from the city by belts of land, which were to remain free from any building development.

Footnotes.

1. E.G. Culpin, The Garden City Movement up to Date, 1913, p.7.
2. Ibid. p.11.

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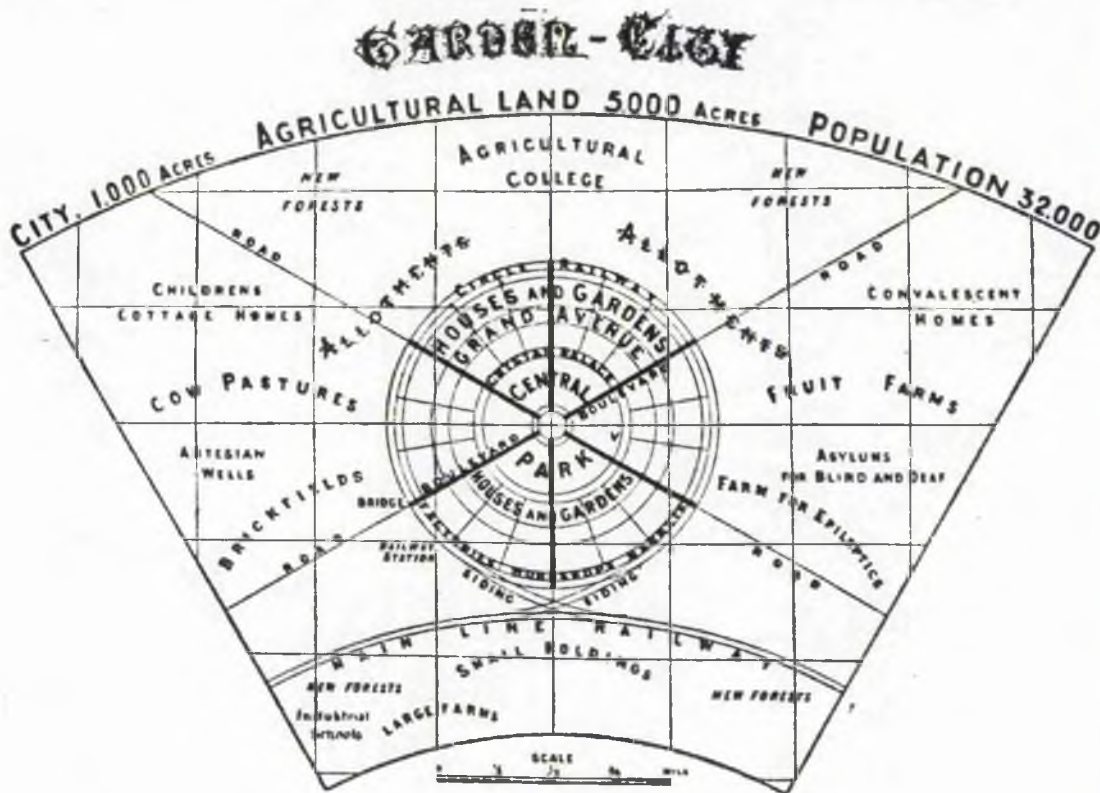
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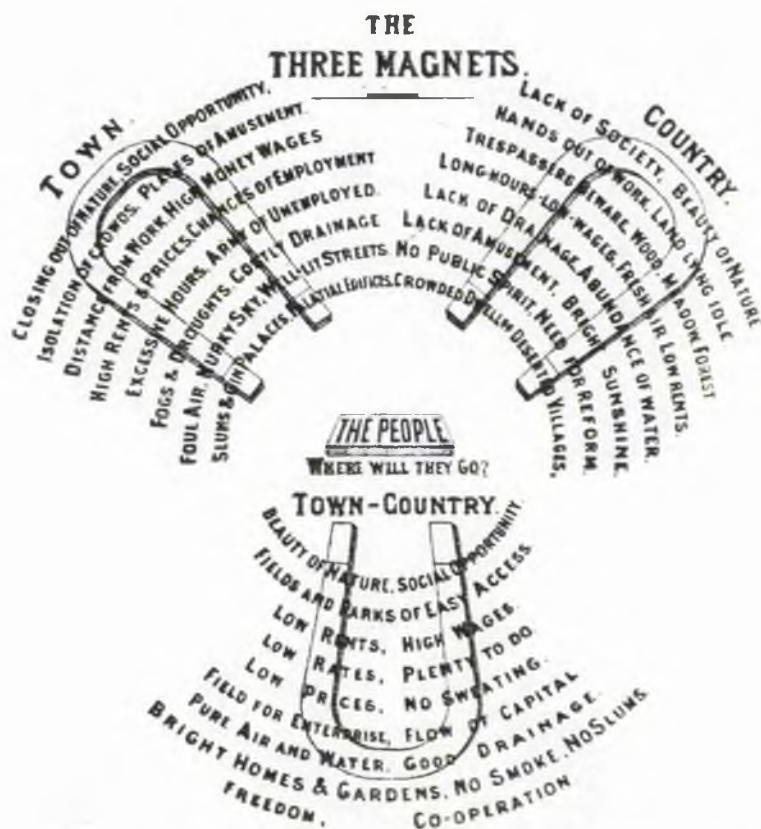
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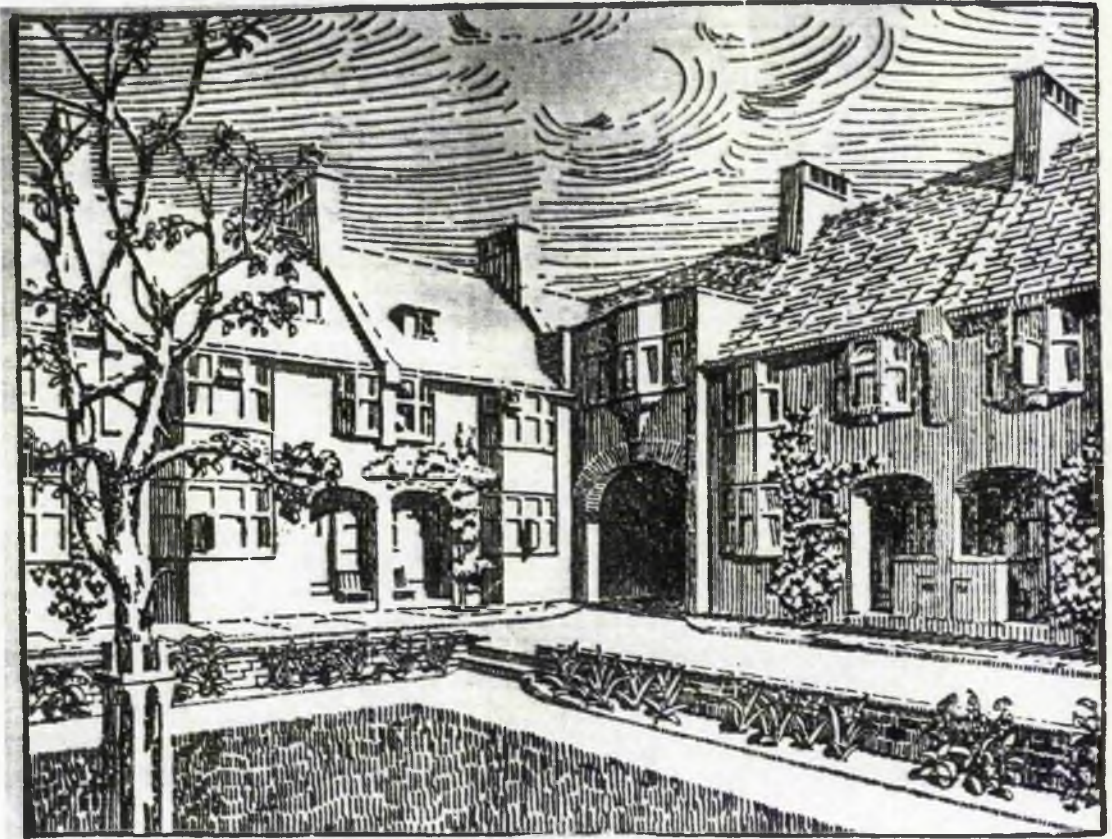
Scottish National Housing Company, Ltd. Company files. Registrar of Companies, Edinburgh.



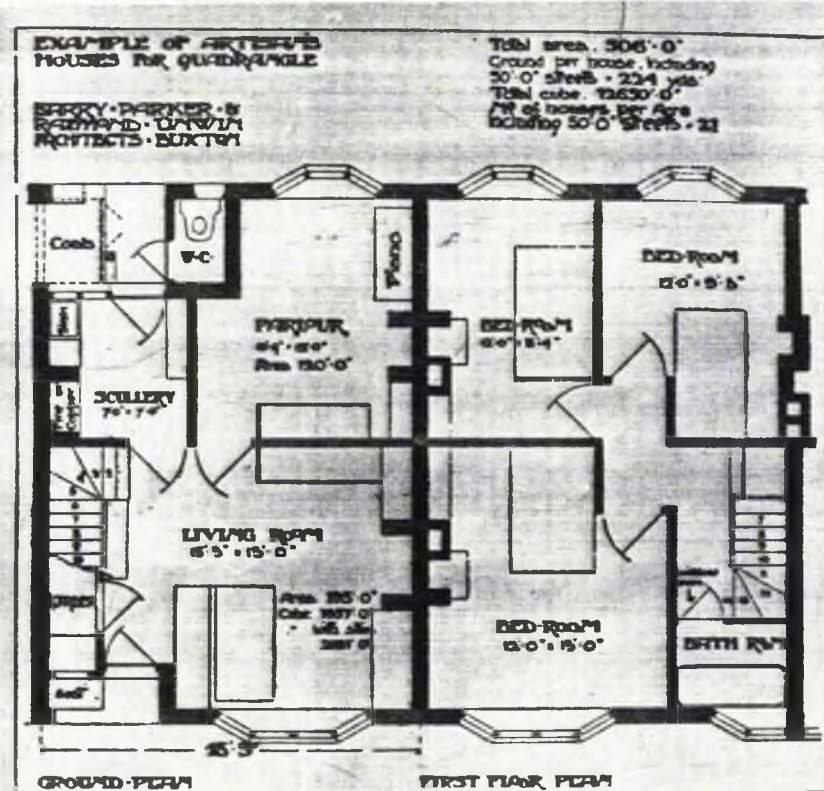
1, 2. Diagrams by Howard from Garden Cities of Tomorrow, 1902.







3, 4. Diagrams by Unwin from Cottage Plans and Common Sense, 1902.

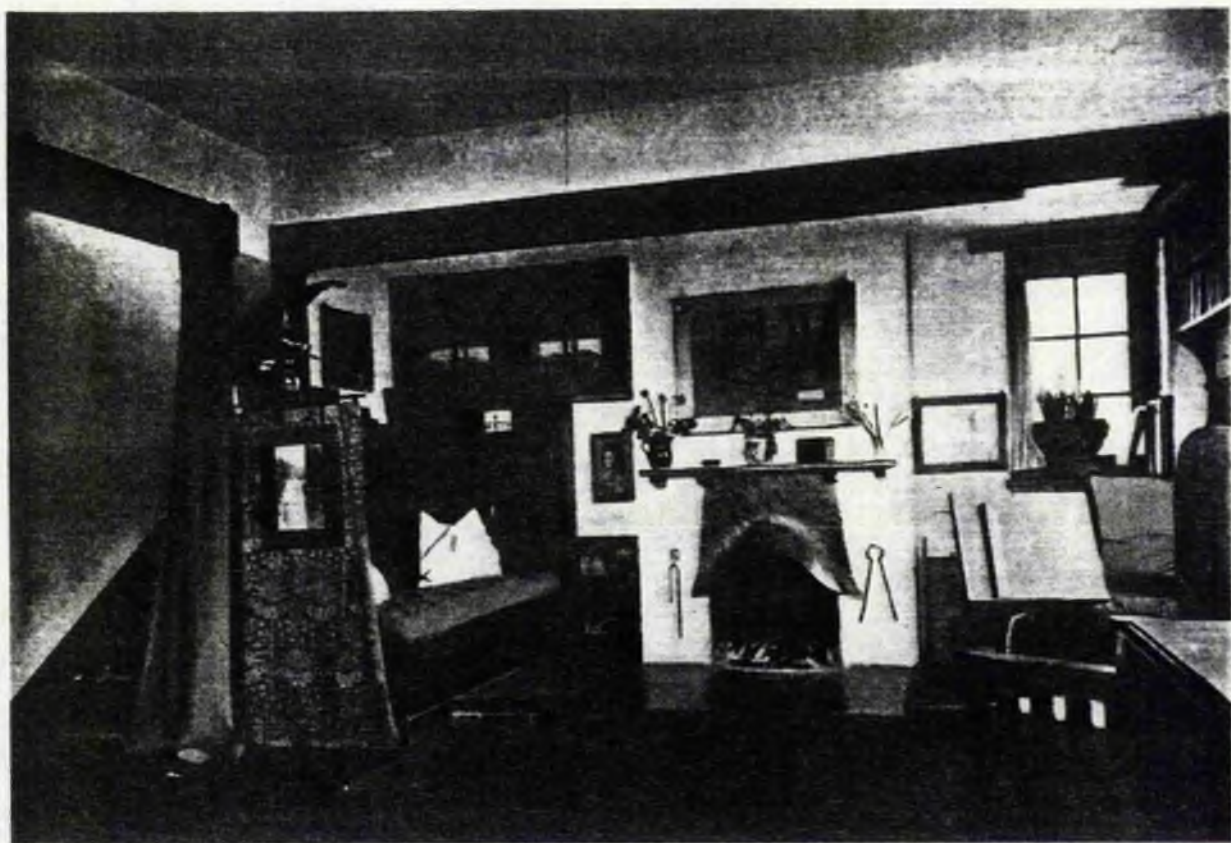






5. Pair of cottages on Letchworth Lane, designed by Parker and Unwin, 1904.

6. Interior of above.







7. House on Croft Lane, Letchworth. C.H. Hignett.

8. Pair of houses on Baldock Road, Letchworth. H. Clapham Lander.







9. Workmen's cottages at Rushby Mead, Letchworth. (Howard Cottage Society, Ltd.).

10. Workmen's cottages at Ridge Road, Letchworth. (Garden City Tenants, Ltd.).



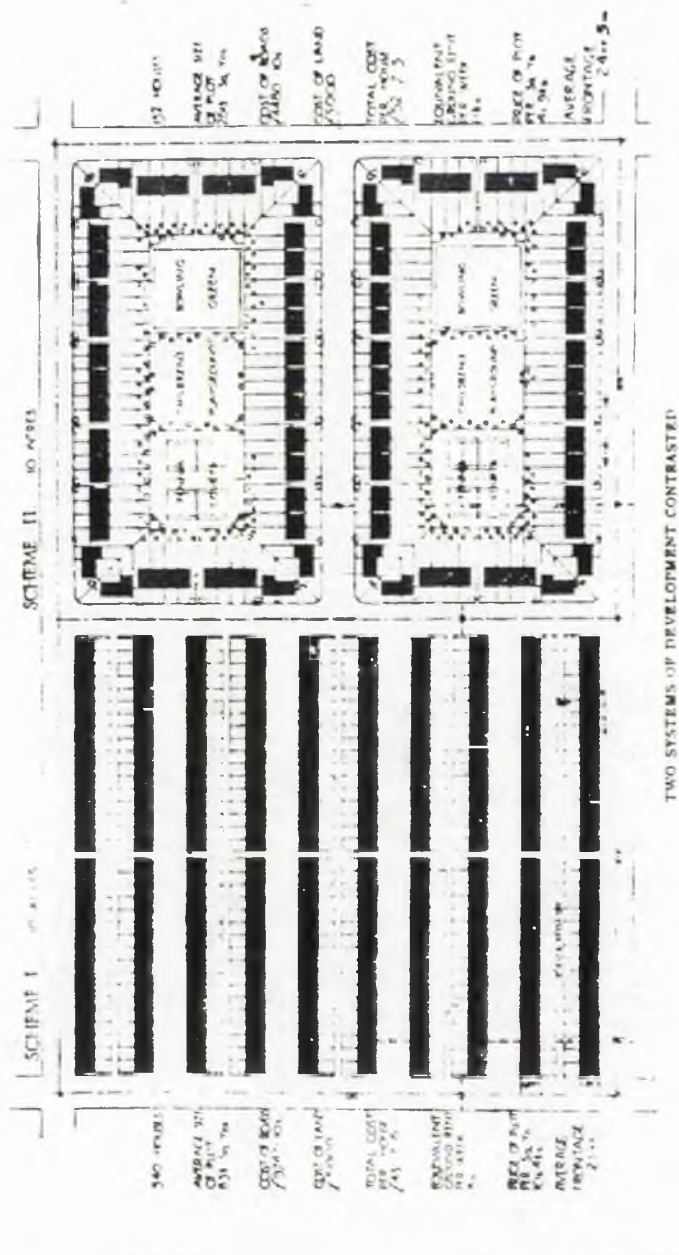




11. Workmen's cottages at Shott Lane, (Letchworth Housing Society Ltd.).

12. Lytton Avenue, Letchworth.





13. Unwin, diagram from *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding*, 1912.





14. Plan prepared by the Garden City Association, from *Garden Cities and Town Planning*, vol III, no. 29, Aug 1908.

# DUNFERMLINE DEVELOPMENT

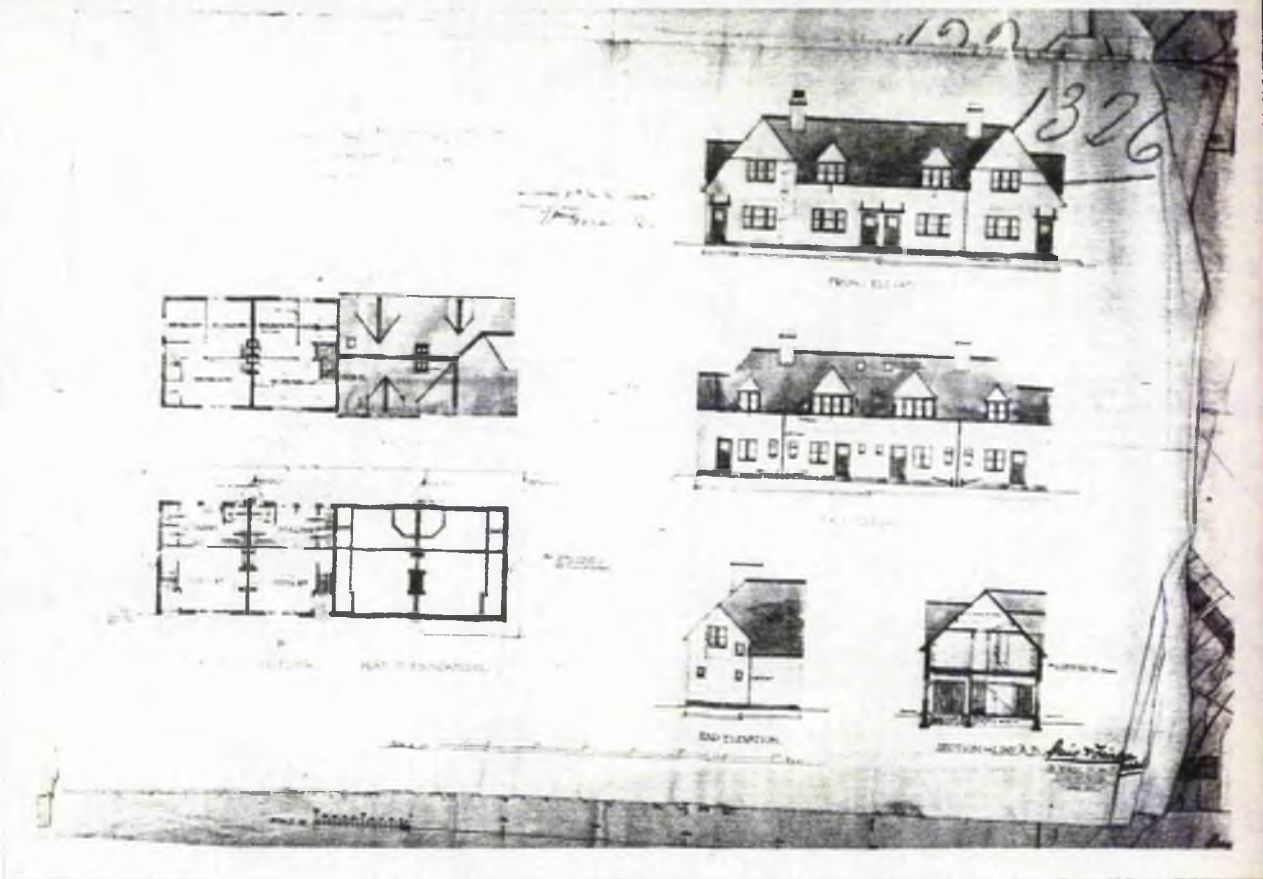
## Rosyth and adjacent Town Planning schemes.









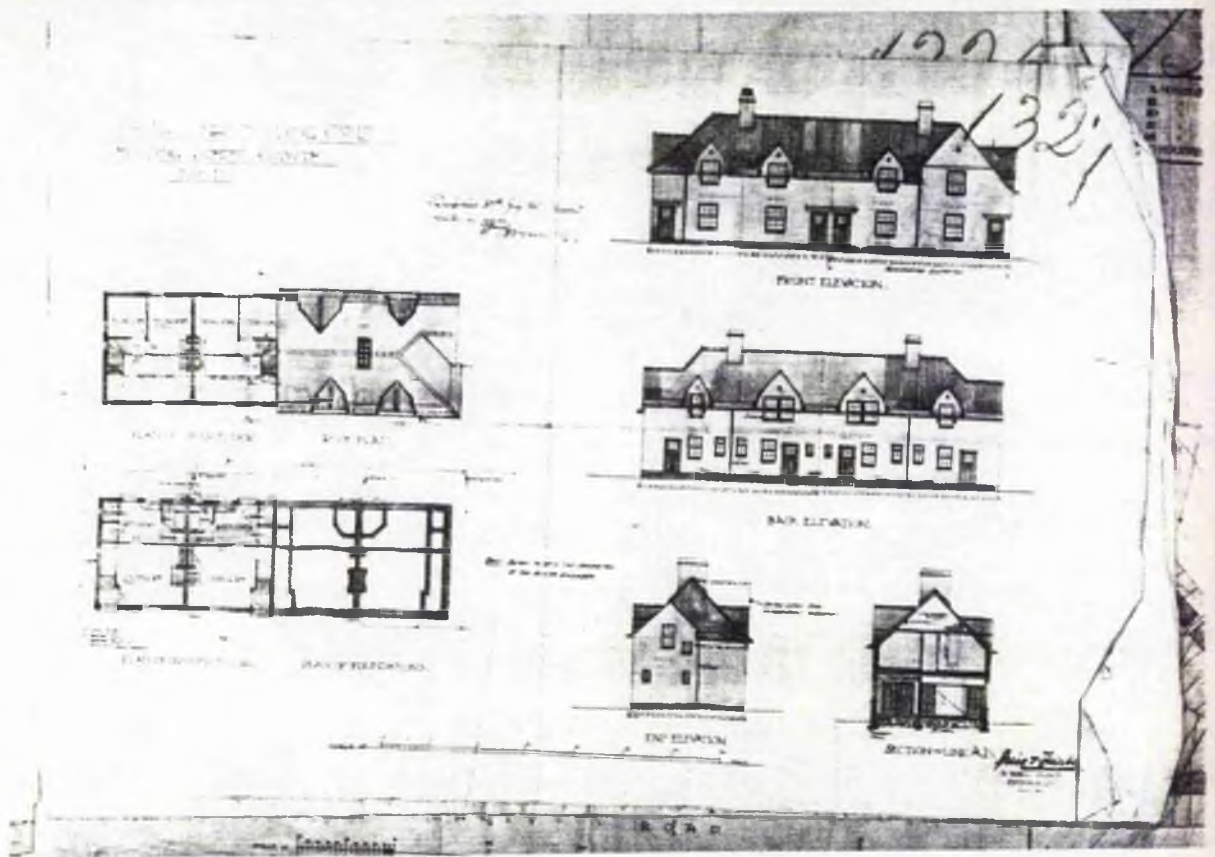


18. Greig and Fairbairn, Type C, Rosyth, 1915.

19. C.F.A. Voysey, plan for a house on the Hog's Back, near Guildford, Surrey, 1896.

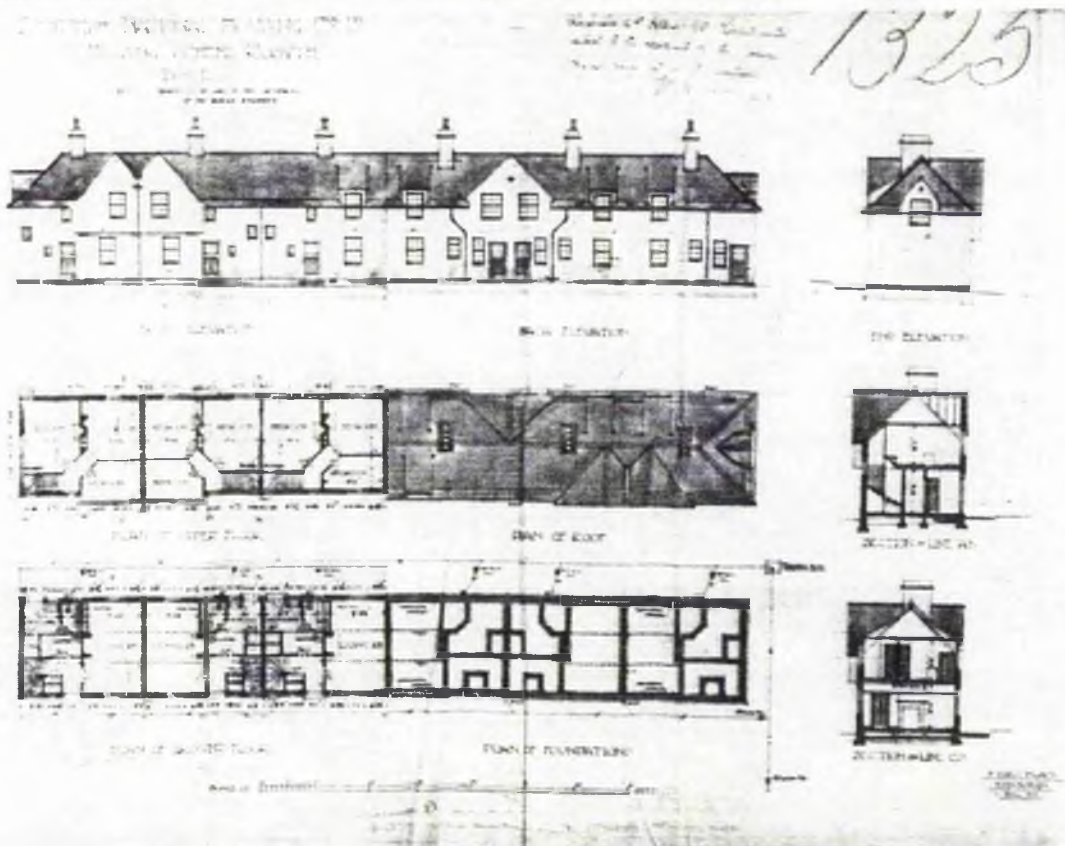




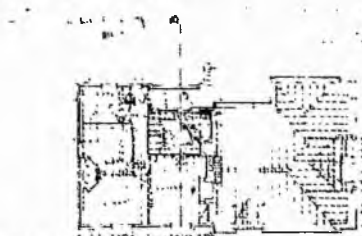


20. Greig and Fairbairn, Type D, Rosyth, 1915.

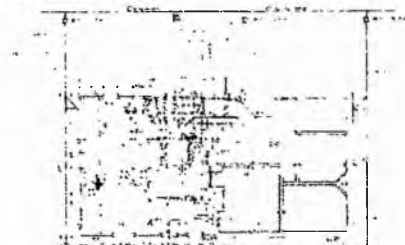
21. Greig and Fairbairn, Type E, Rosyth, 1915.



SCOTTISH NATIONAL HOUSING C<sup>Y</sup> 1<sup>st</sup>  
HOUSING SCHEME ROSYTH  
Type - "G" Drawing No. 1



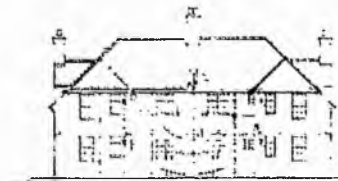
PLAN OF UPPER FLOOR ROOF PLAN



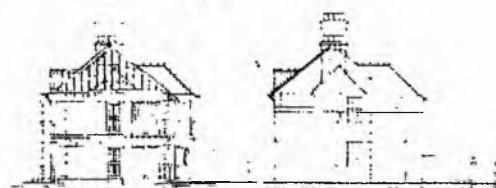
PLAN OF LOWER FLOOR PLAN OF FOUNDATIONS



BACK ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION



SECTION ON LINE - A-B

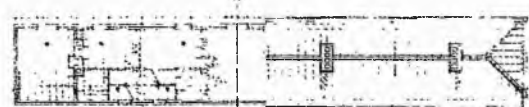
END ELEVATION

CANON - 1914  
111 George St. Glasgow  
November 1915

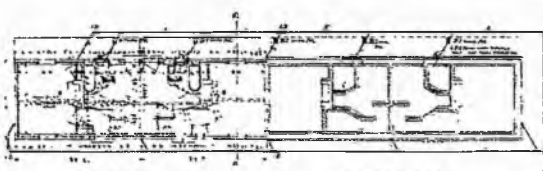
22. Mottram, Type G, Rosyth, Nov 1915.

23. Mottram, Type M, Rosyth, Dec 1915.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL HOUSING C<sup>Y</sup> 1<sup>st</sup>  
HOUSING SCHEME ROSYTH  
Type M Drawing No. 1



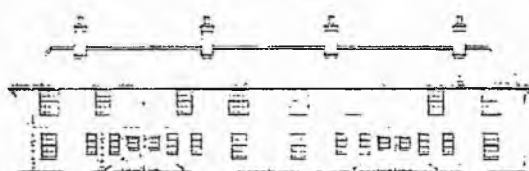
UPPER FLOOR PLAN ROOF PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN FOUNDATION PLAN



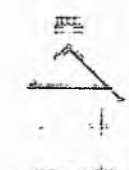
FRONT ELEVATION



BACK ELEVATION



SECTION



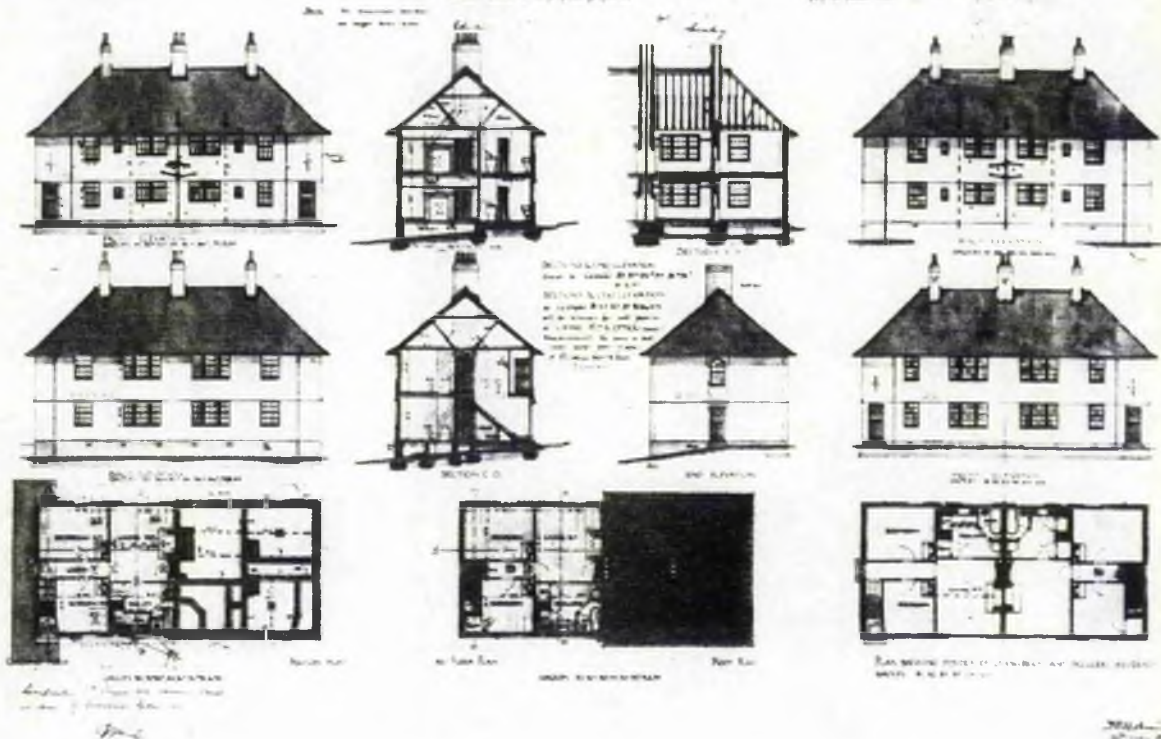
END ELEVATION

GENERAL P<sup>ER</sup>MIT  
SCOTTISH  
NATIONAL



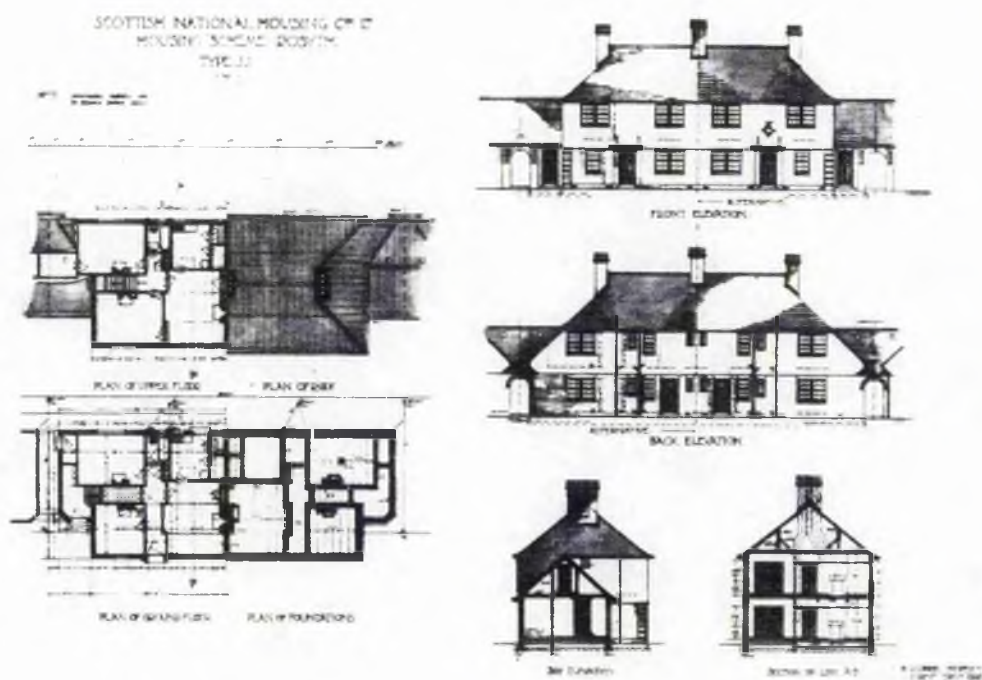
Amount of the last two years should be added - sum of these  
 added to the sum of previous years and add in the total  
 the same thing for the future

Support with confidence. I have always said, "My greatest interest is in people." "Customer" thinking. Everything I do is for the customer. It's the only way to succeed. I don't see it any other way.

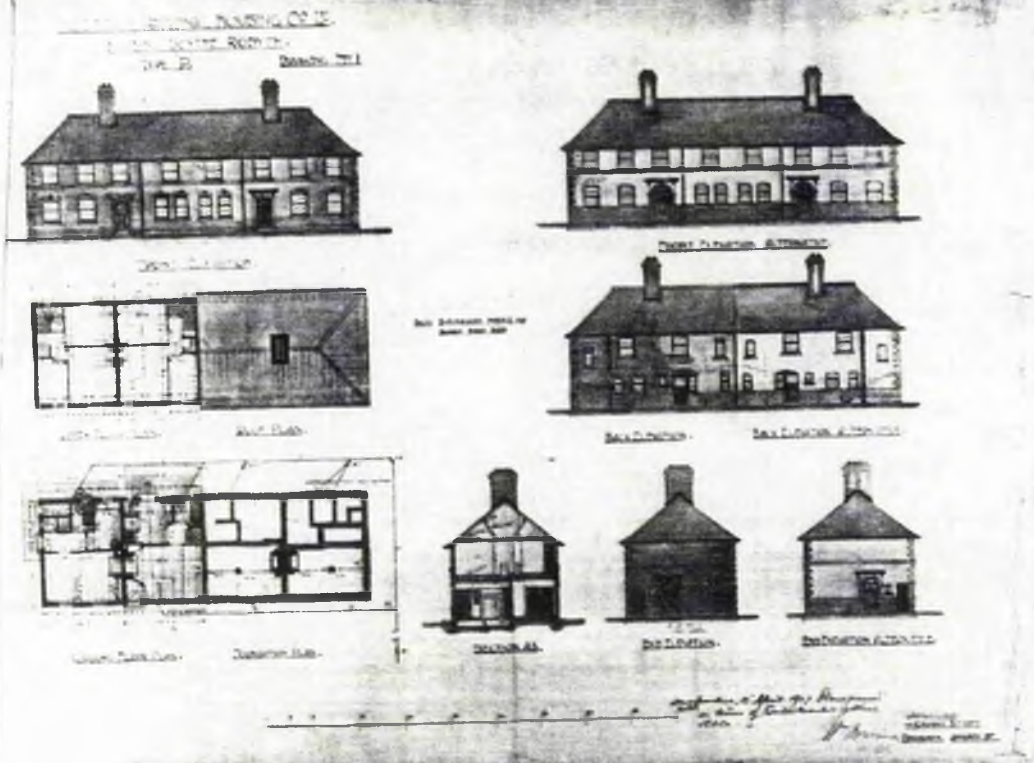


24. Mottram, Type J, Rosyth, July 1916.

25. Mottram, Type JJ, Rosyth, Dec 1916.

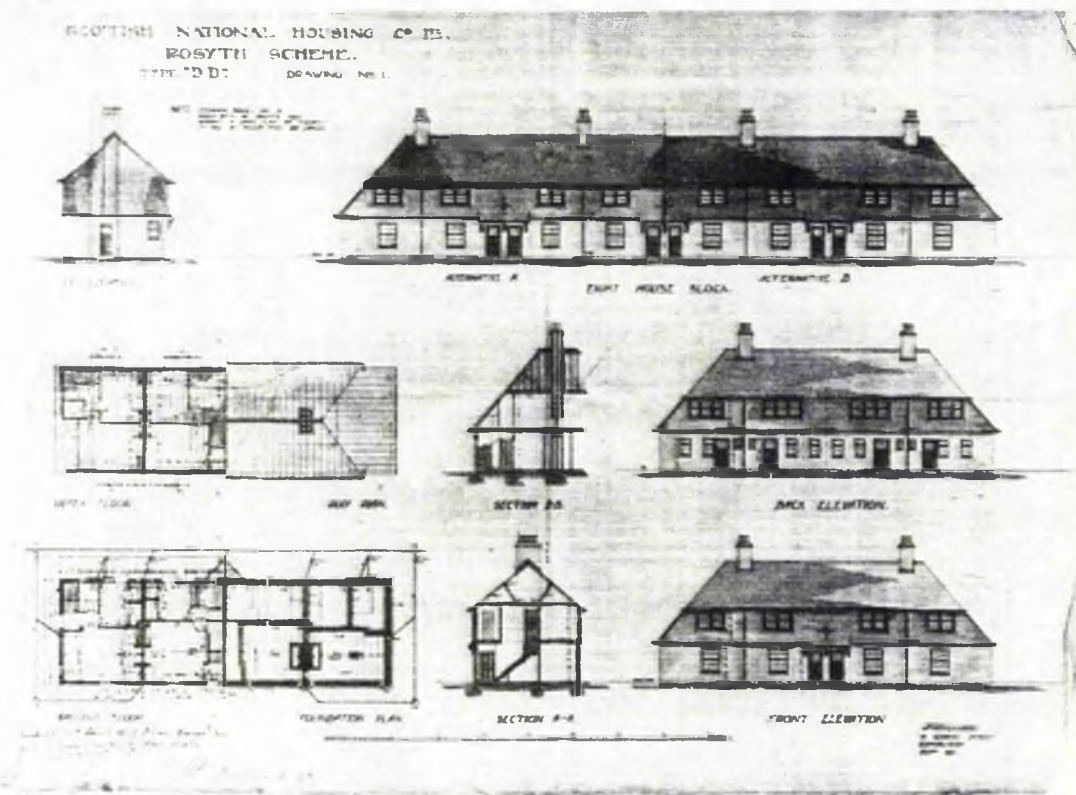






26. Mottram, Type P, Rosyth, Jan 1917.

27. Mottram, Type DD, Rosyth, Feb 1917.





SCOTTISH NATIONAL HOUSING CO. LTD.  
HOUSING SCHEME ROSYTH  
DRAWING NO. 1

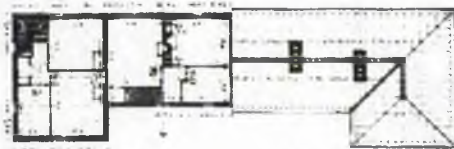


ALTERNATIVE FRONT ELEVATION



ALTERNATIVE BACK ELEVATION

BACK ELEVATION

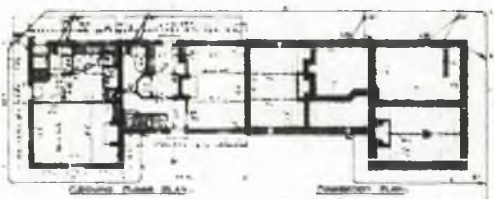


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

ROOF PLAN



FRONT ELEVATION



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

FOUNDATION PLAN



SECTION A-B



SIDE ELEVATION

SCOTTISH NATIONAL HOUSING CO. LTD.

28. Mottram, Type L, Rosyth, Feb 1917.

29. Mottram, Type O, Rosyth, Feb 1917.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL HOUSING CO. LTD.  
HOUSING SCHEME ROSYTH  
TYPE 'O'.  
DRAWING NO. 2



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

ROOF PLAN



SIDE ELEVATION



BACK ELEVATION

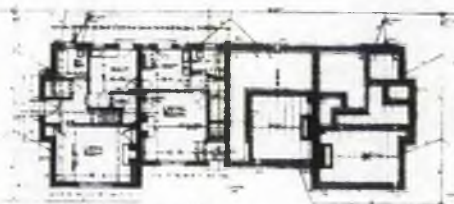
OR ALTERNATIVE



SECTION A-B



FRONT ELEVATION



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

FOUNDATION PLAN



SECTION C-D



ALTERNATIVE FRONT ELEVATION

SCOTTISH NATIONAL HOUSING CO. LTD.

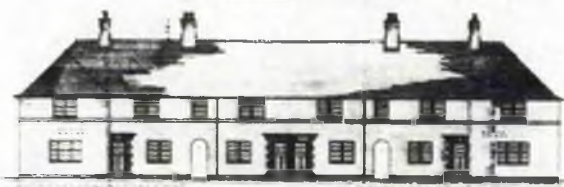




NATIONAL BUILDING SOCIETY  
 ROSETHAM, ENGLAND.  
 TYPE O HOUSES, RINGING, FINES  
 1917



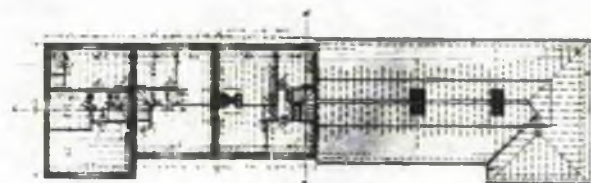
FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



END ELEVATION

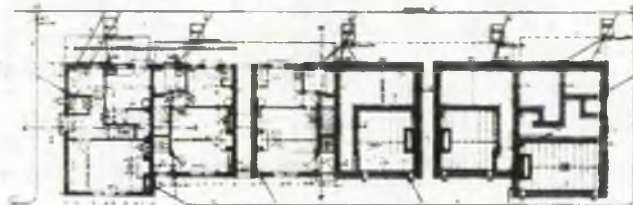


FLOOR PLAN

ROOF PLAN



SECTION A-A



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

ROOF PLAN



SECTION B-B



SCALE BAR

31. Mottram, Type O revised, Rosyth, Nov 1917.



1



1



SCOTTISH NATIONAL HOUSING CO. LTD.  
ROSYTH HOUSING 4TH DEVELOPMENT  
TYPE S1 DRAWING NO. 1



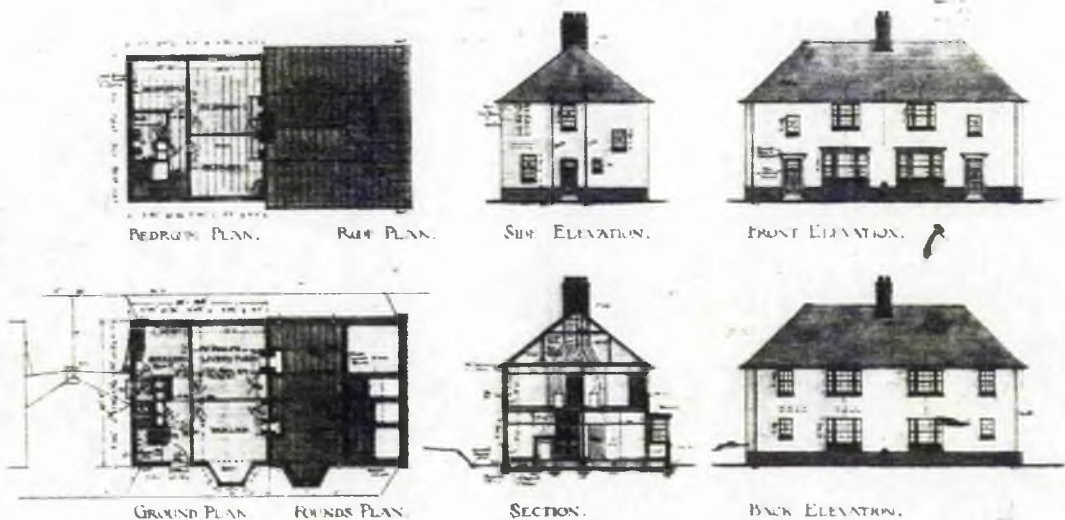
34. Mottram, Type S1, Rosyth, 1922.

35. Mottram, Type S2, Rosyth, 1922.

31st January 1923 Signed with reference to the Contract for Forty Houses Types S1 and S2  
for the Housing, Rosyth & Newburgh

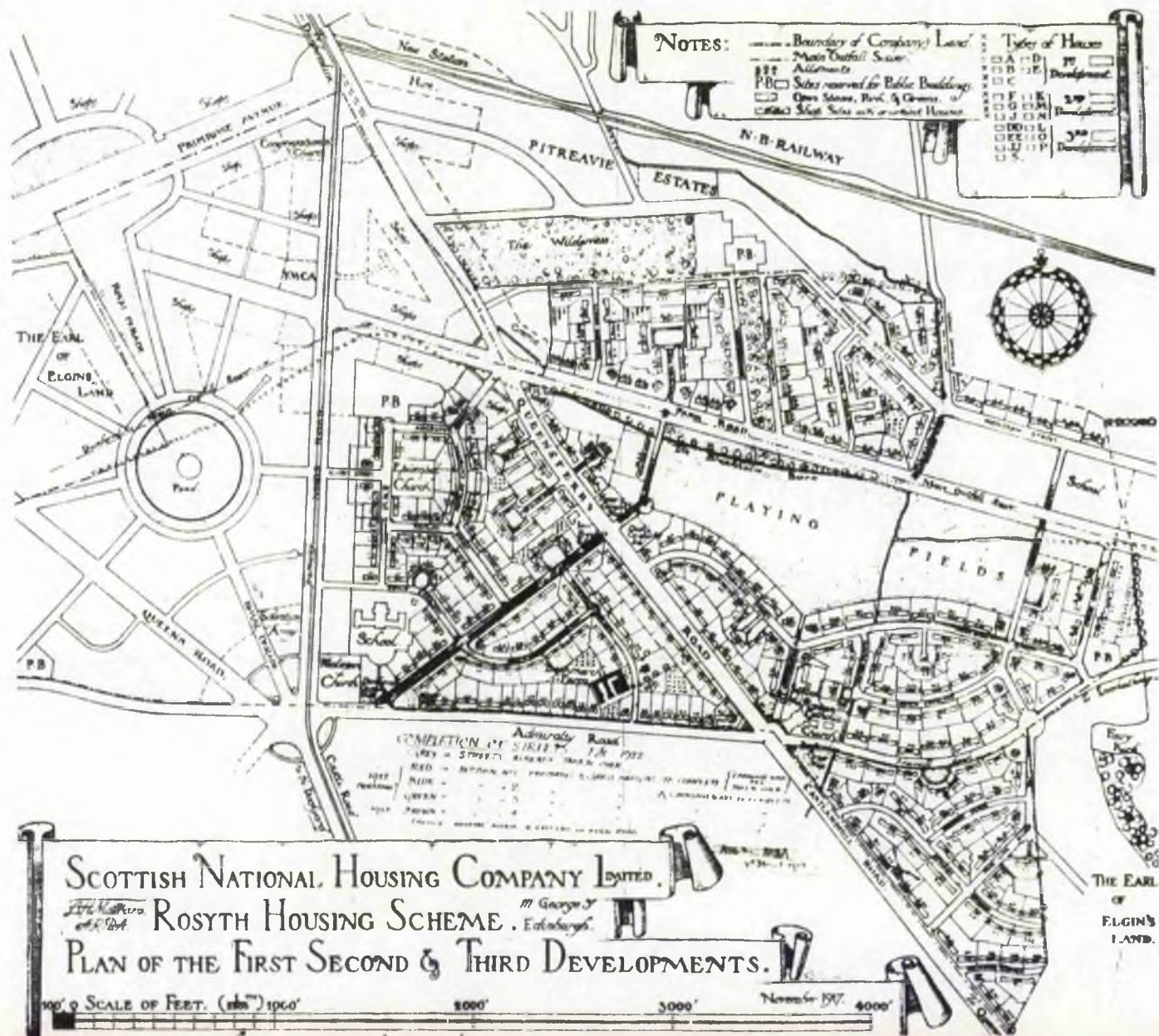
SCOTTISH NATIONAL HOUSING COMPANY LTD.  
ROSYTH HOUSING : TYPE S1 (SUBORDINATE OFFICIALS' HOMES)  
ORDER E-12

DRAWING NO. 1



SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"







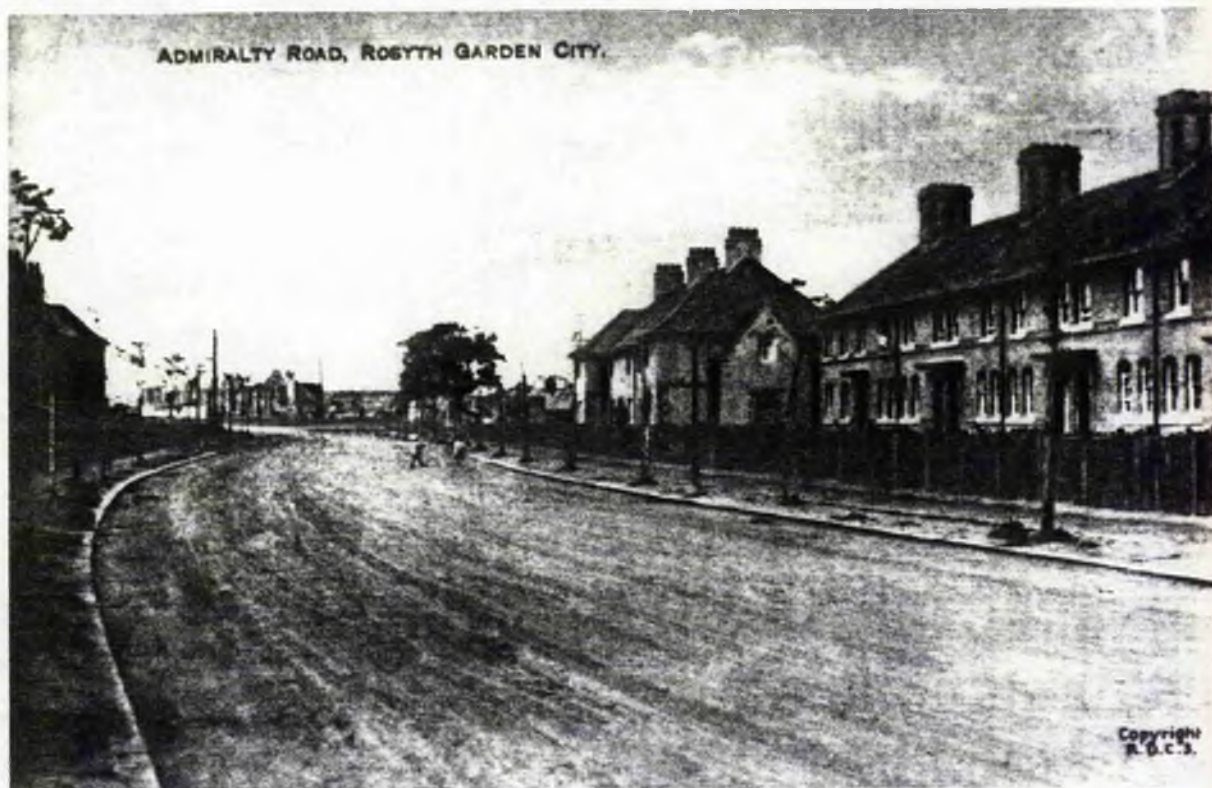


37. Backmarch Road, Rosyth, c.1920.

38. Park Road, Rosyth, c.1920.







39. Admiralty Road. Rosyth. c.1920.

40. Holburn Place, Rosyth. c.1920.







41. Findlay Street, Rosyth, c.1920.

42. Woodside Street, Rosyth, c.1920.





*Parkside Street, Road D. 12, Rosyth*

43. Parkside Street, Rosyth, c.1920.

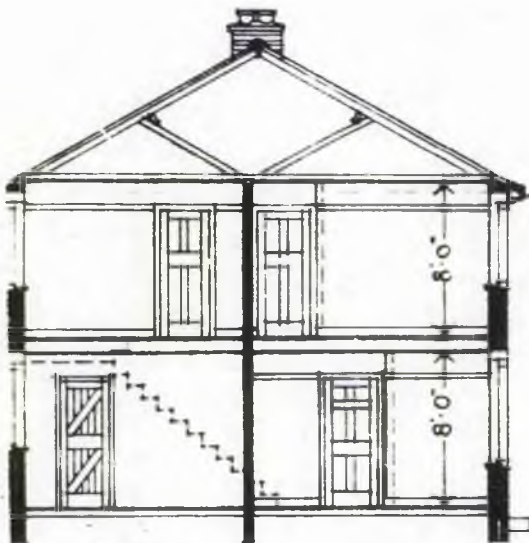


# CLASS A URBAN

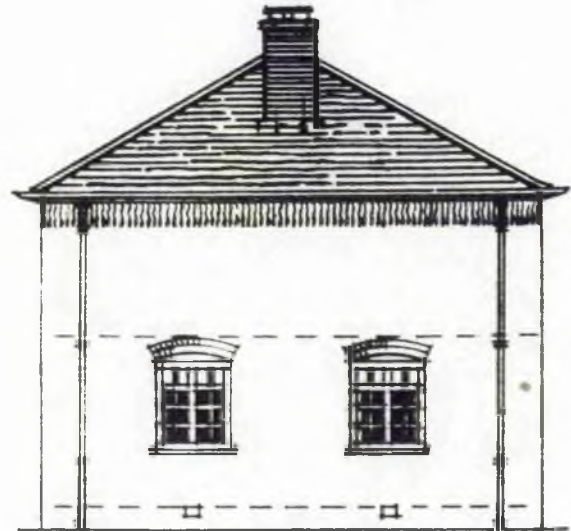
## SOUTHERLY ASPECT



FRONT ELEVATION



SECTION A-B



SIDE ELEVATION



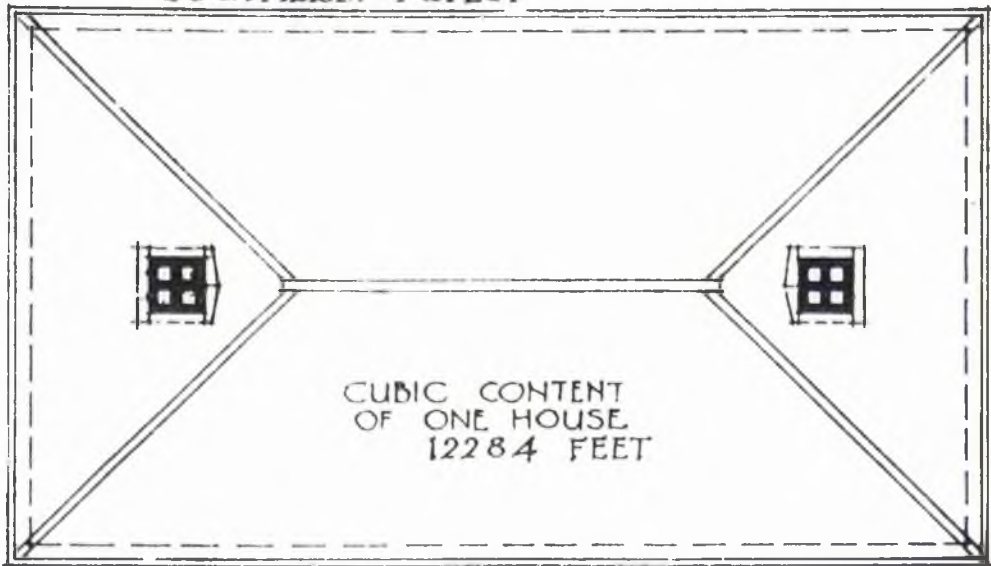
C B & H D

BACK ELEVATION

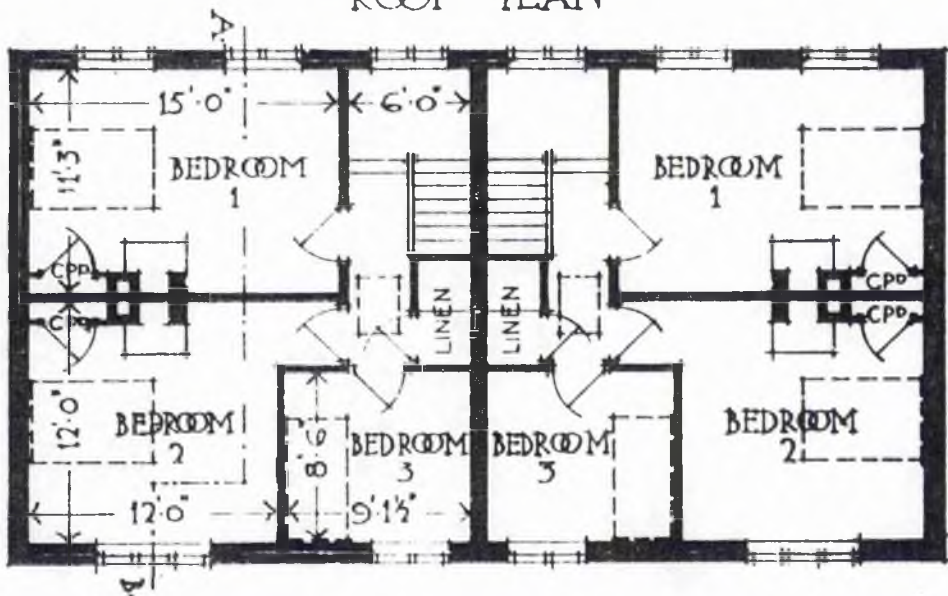


# CLASS A URBAN

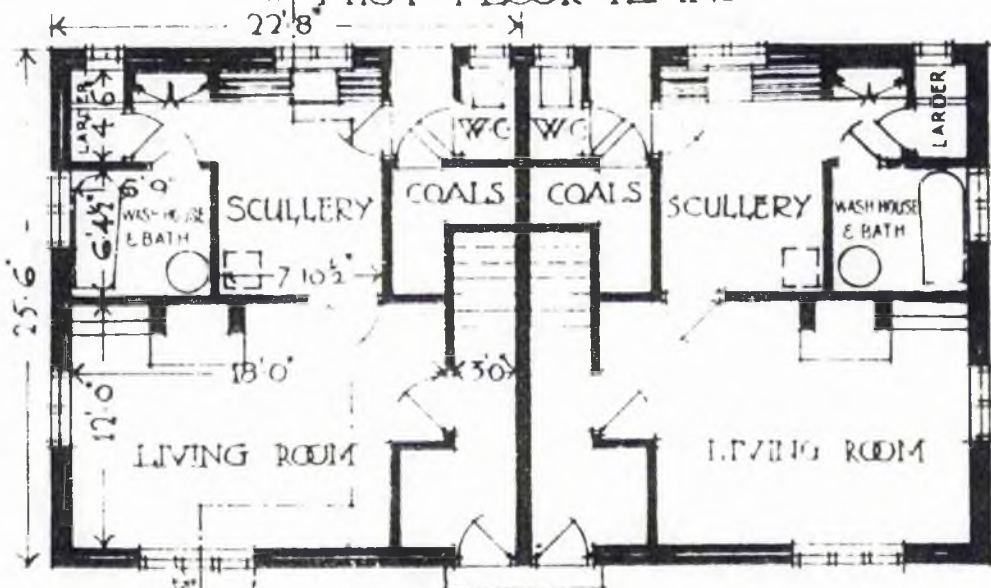
SOUTHERLY ASPECT



ROOF PLAN

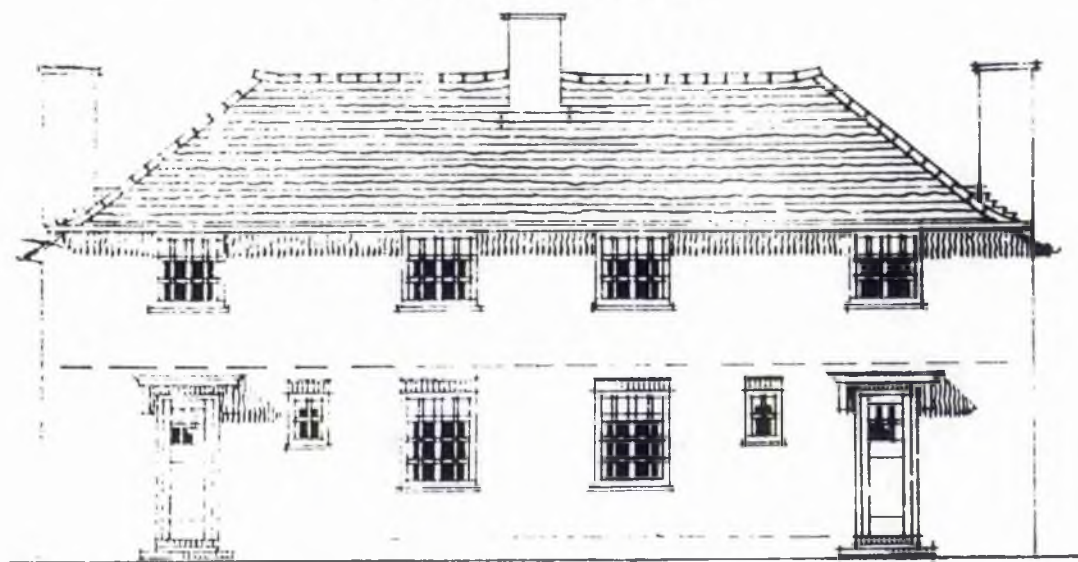


FIRST FLOOR PLANS



GROUND FLOOR PLANS

# CLASS A RURAL NORTHERLY ASPECT



FRONT ELEVATION



SECTION A-B

SIDE ELEVATION

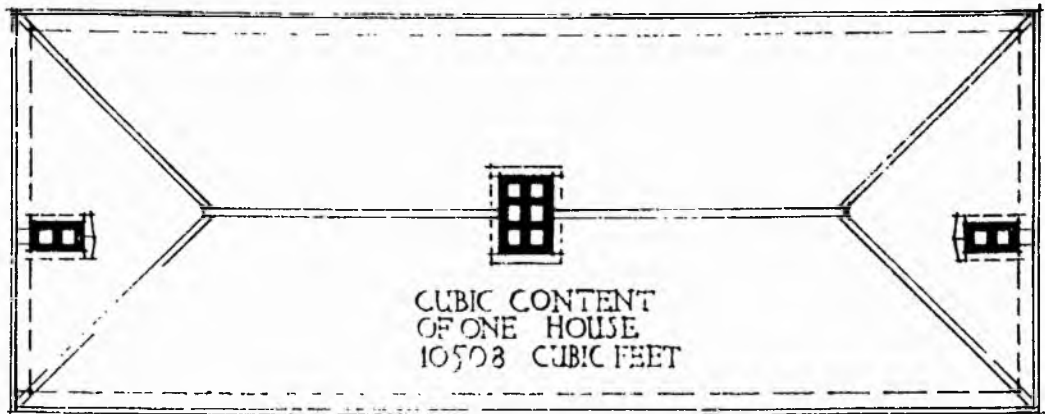


SECTION B-D

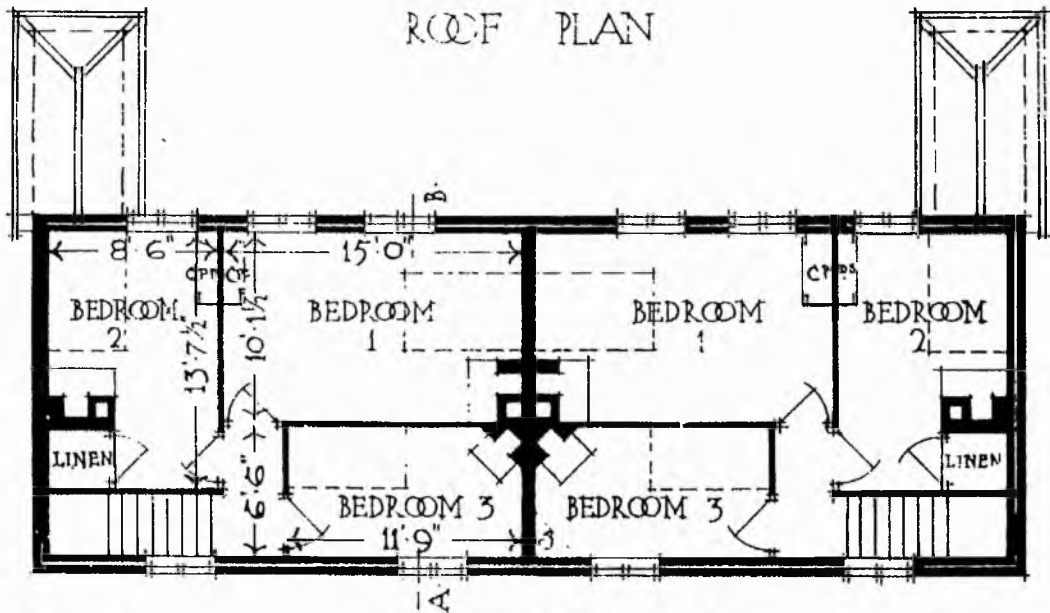
BACK ELEVATION

# CLASS A RURAL

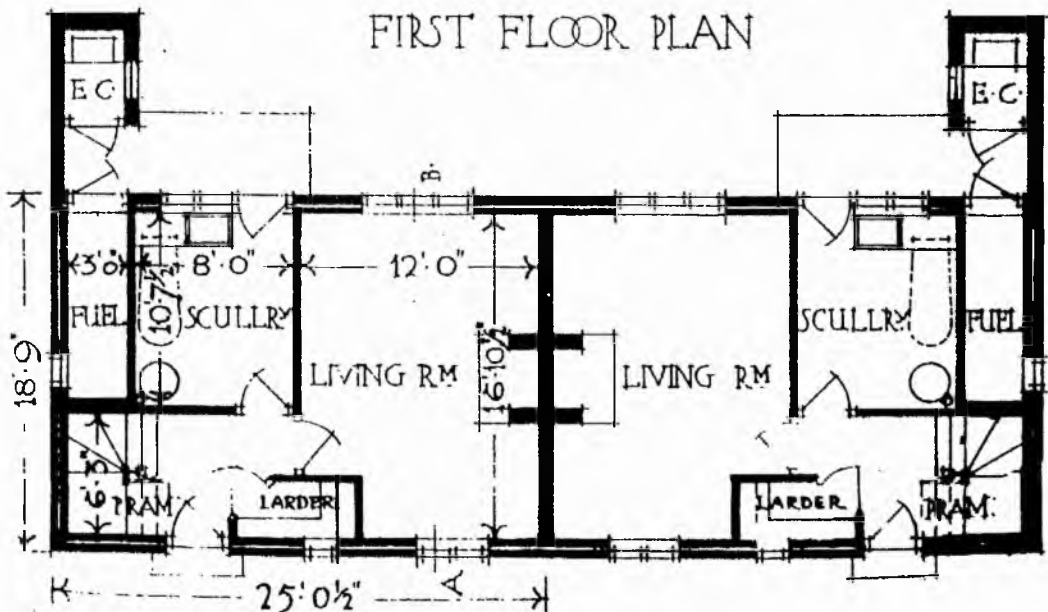
## NORTHERLY ASPECT



ROOF PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

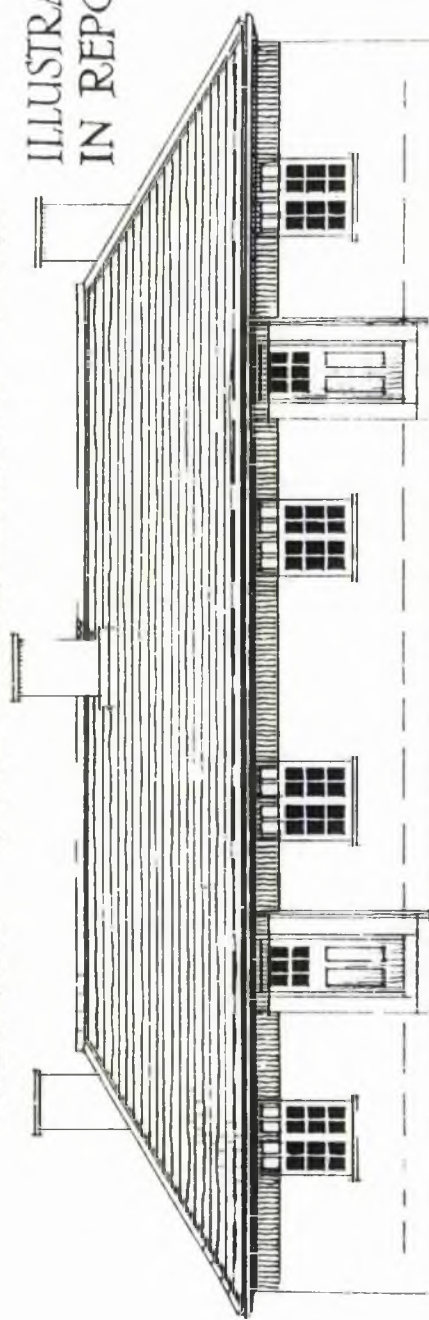


GROUND FLOOR PLAN

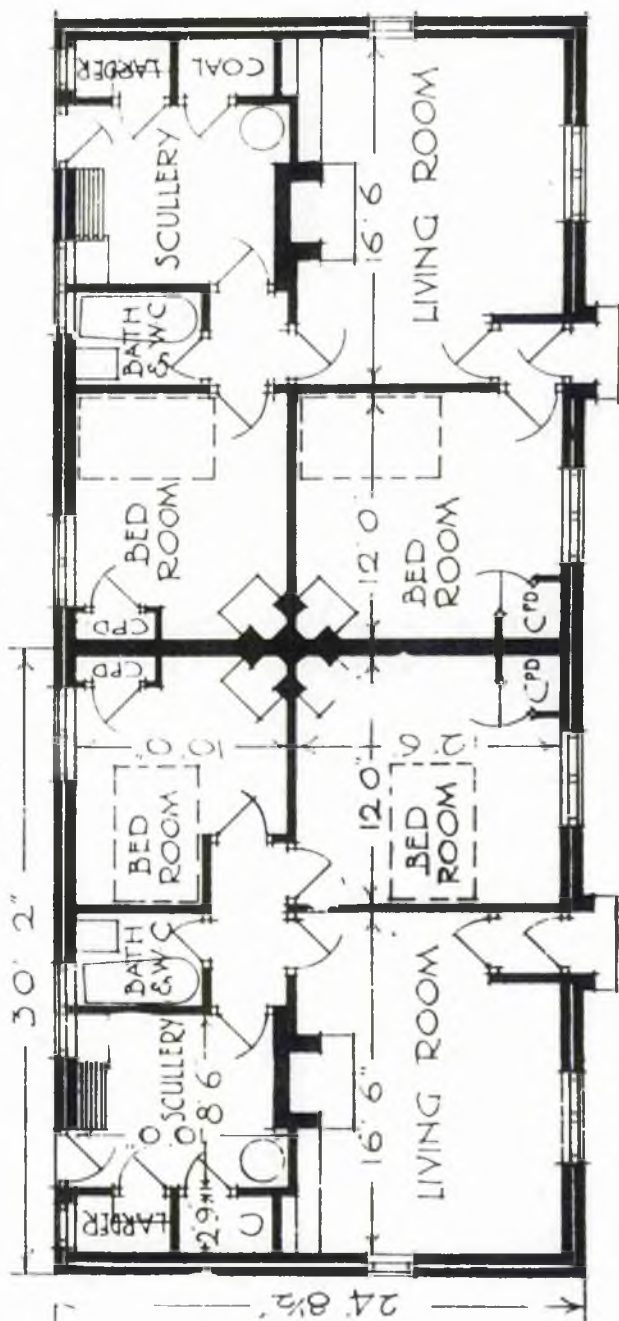


# CLASS A2 BUNGALOW TYPE

ILLUSTRATION N° 16  
IN REPORT [CD 919]

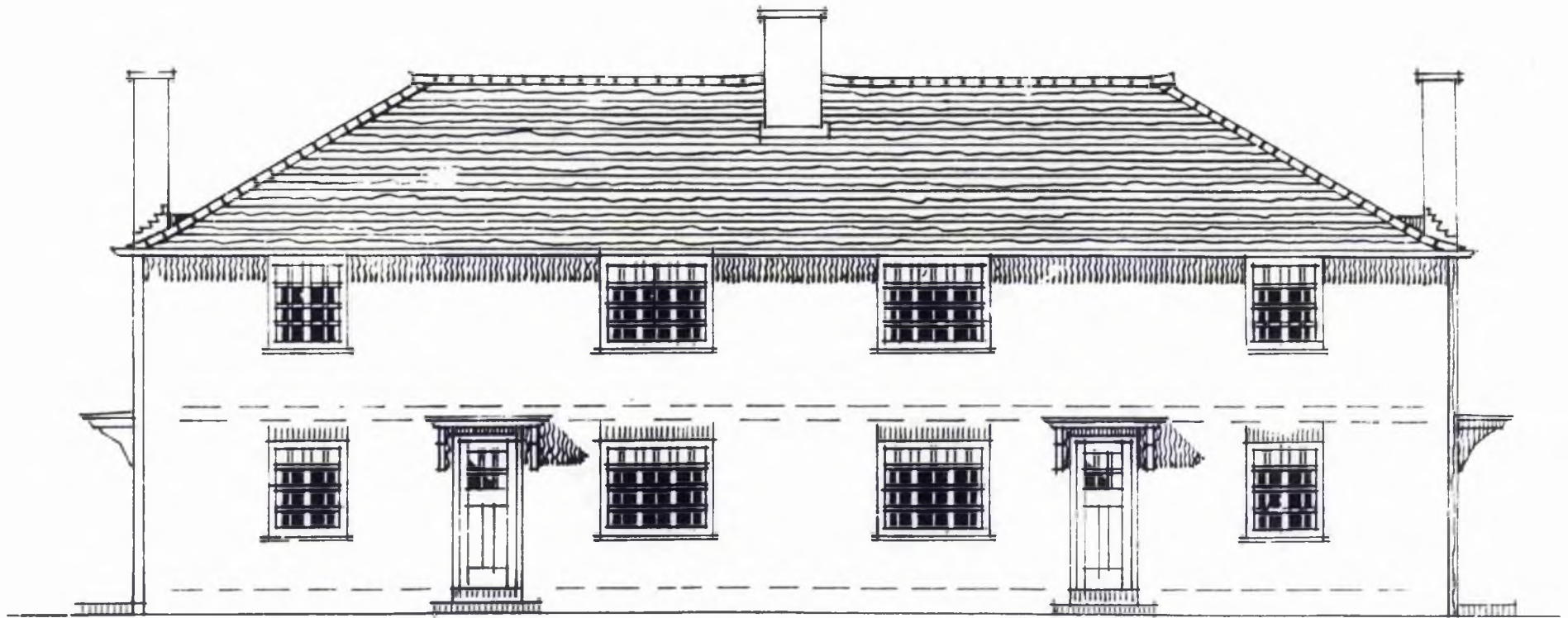


FRONT ELEVATION



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

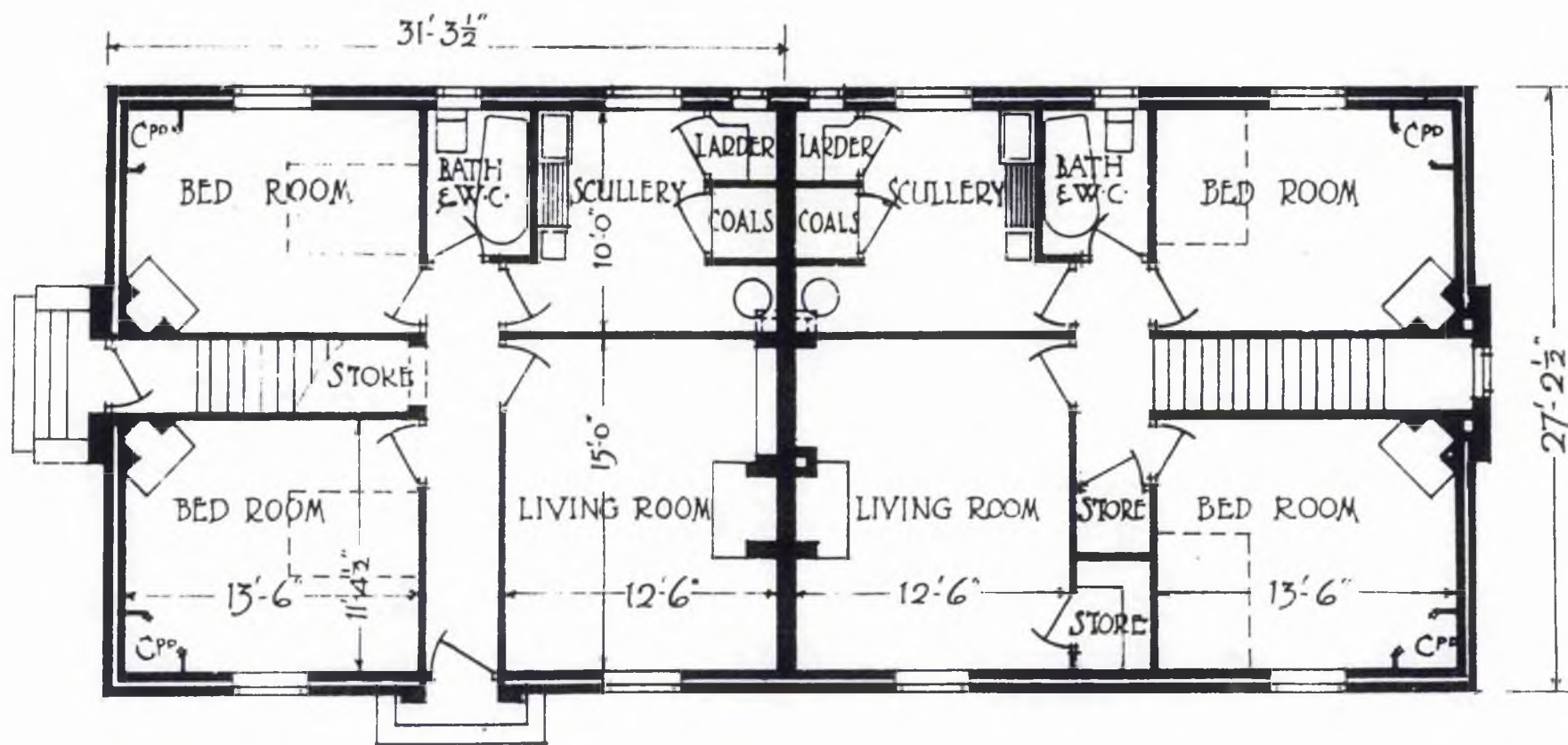
# CLASS A2 ·· FLATTED TYPE



FRONT ELEVATION

# CLASS A2 ., FLATTED TYPE

ILLUSTRATION N° 16A IN REPORT [CD 9191]



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

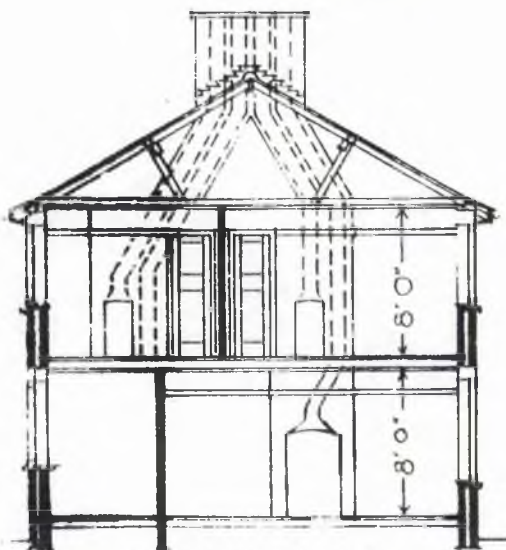


# CLASS B<sup>+</sup> URBAN

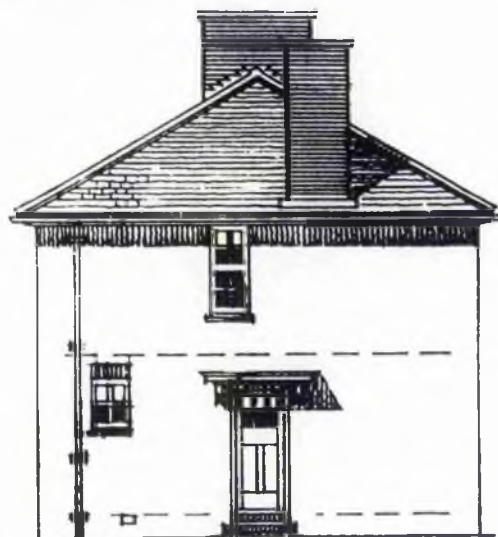
SOUTHERLY ASPECT



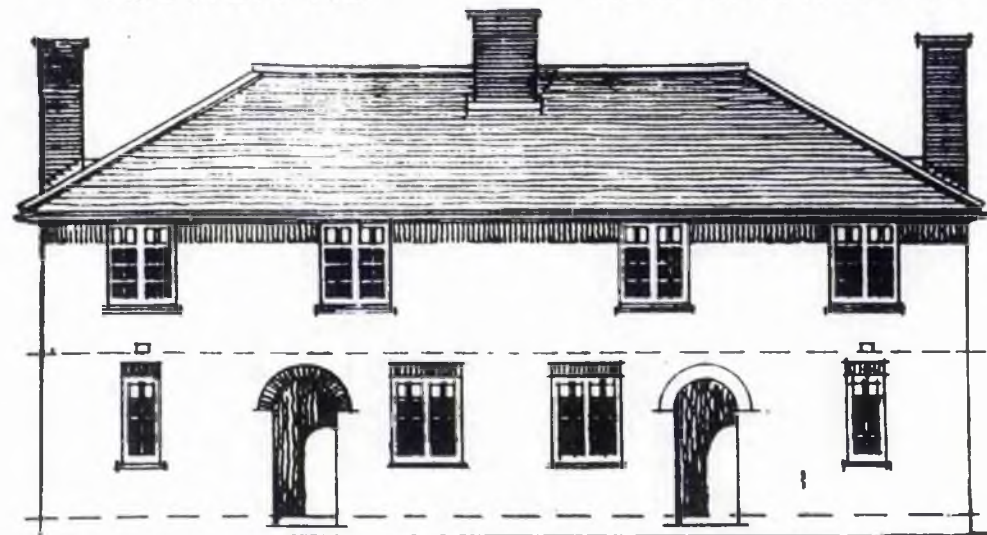
FRONT ELEVATION



SECTION AB



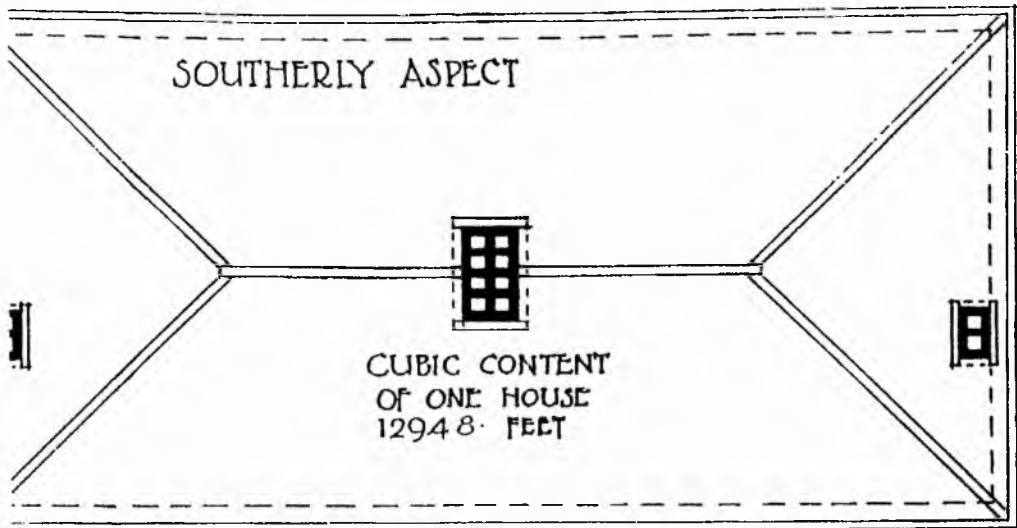
SIDE ELEVATION



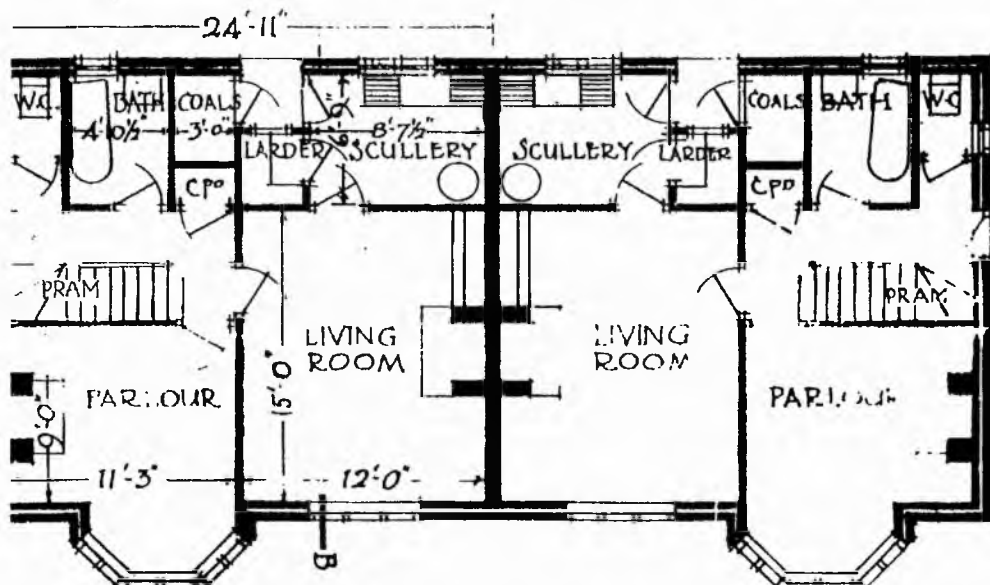
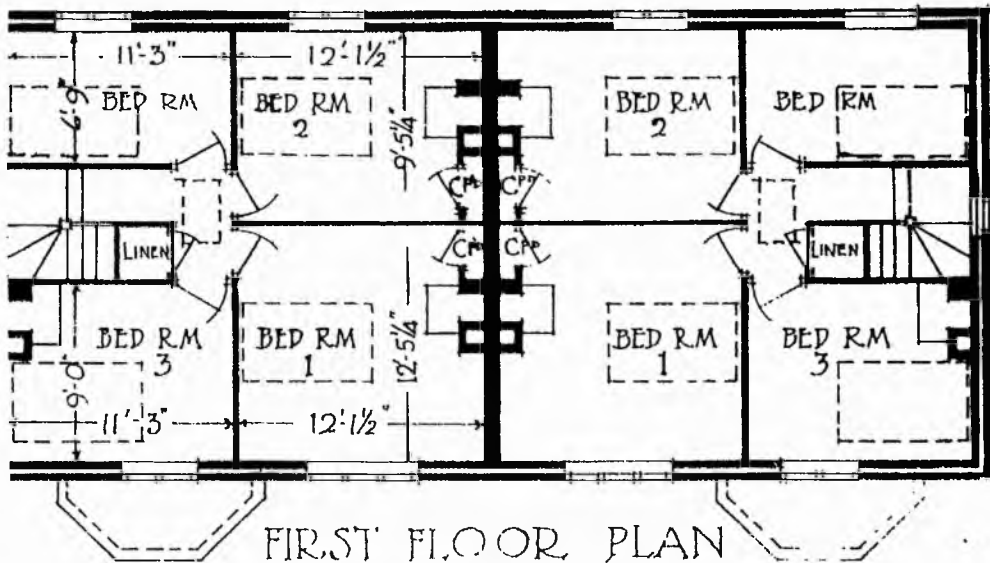
L. G. B. J. D.

BACK ELEVATION

# CLASS B<sup>4</sup> URBAN



ROOF PLAN



3...H.D.

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

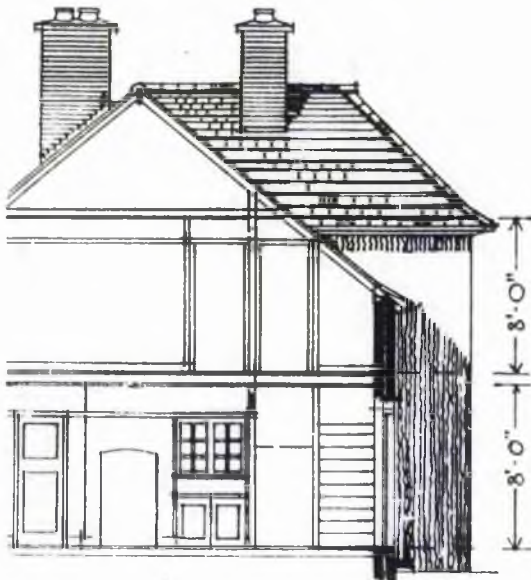


# CLASS B4 URBAN

NORTHERLY ASPECT



FRONT ELEVATION



SECTION A-B.

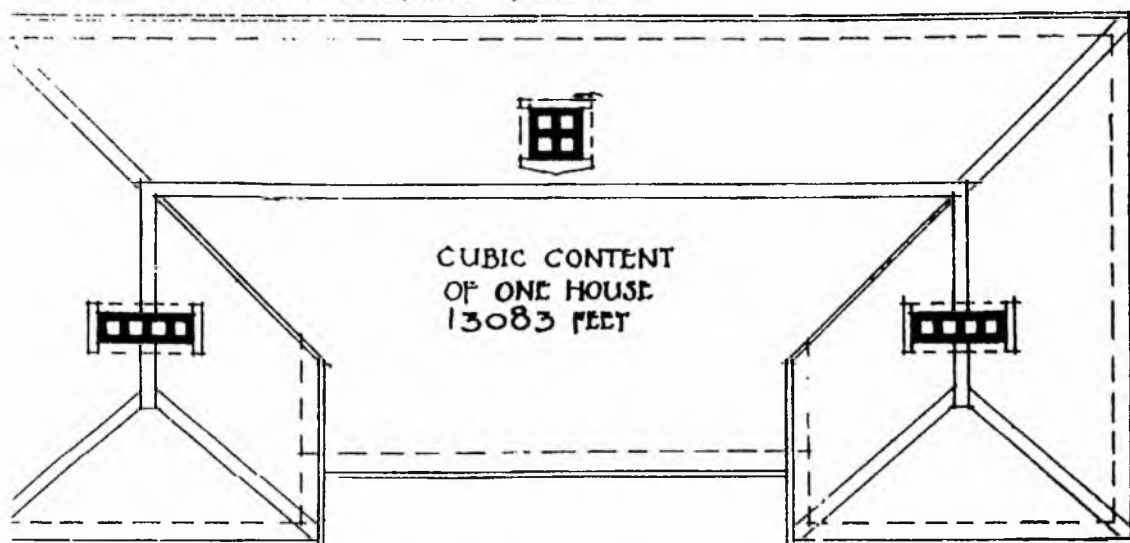


END ELEVATION

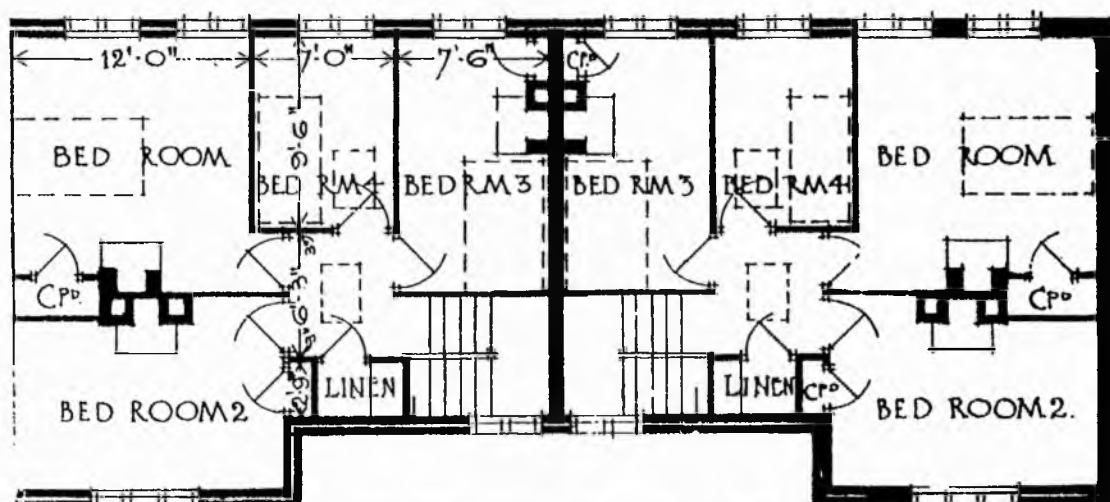


# CLASS B<sup>4</sup> URBAN

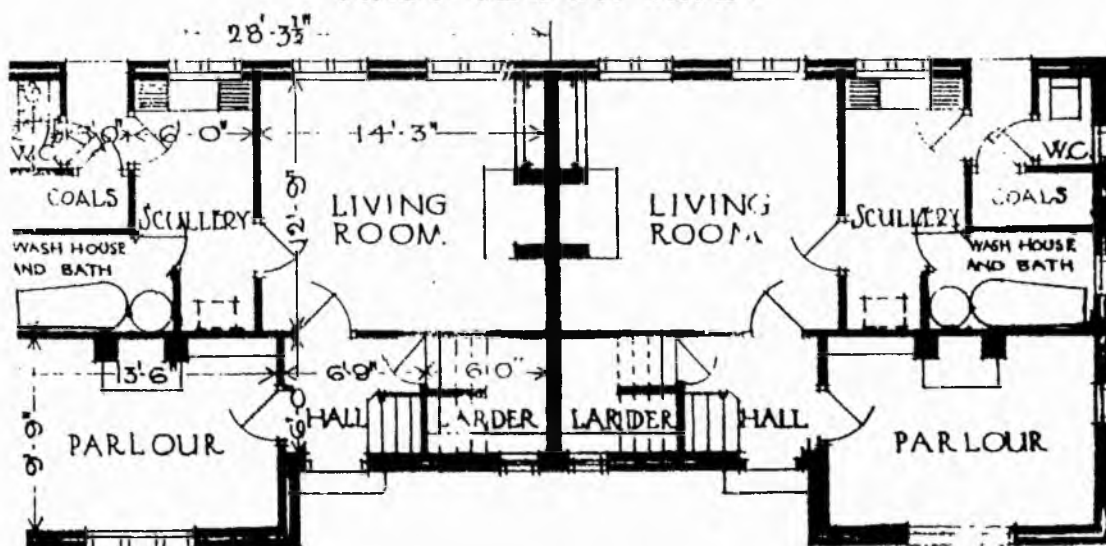
## NORTHERLY ASPECT



ROOF PLAN

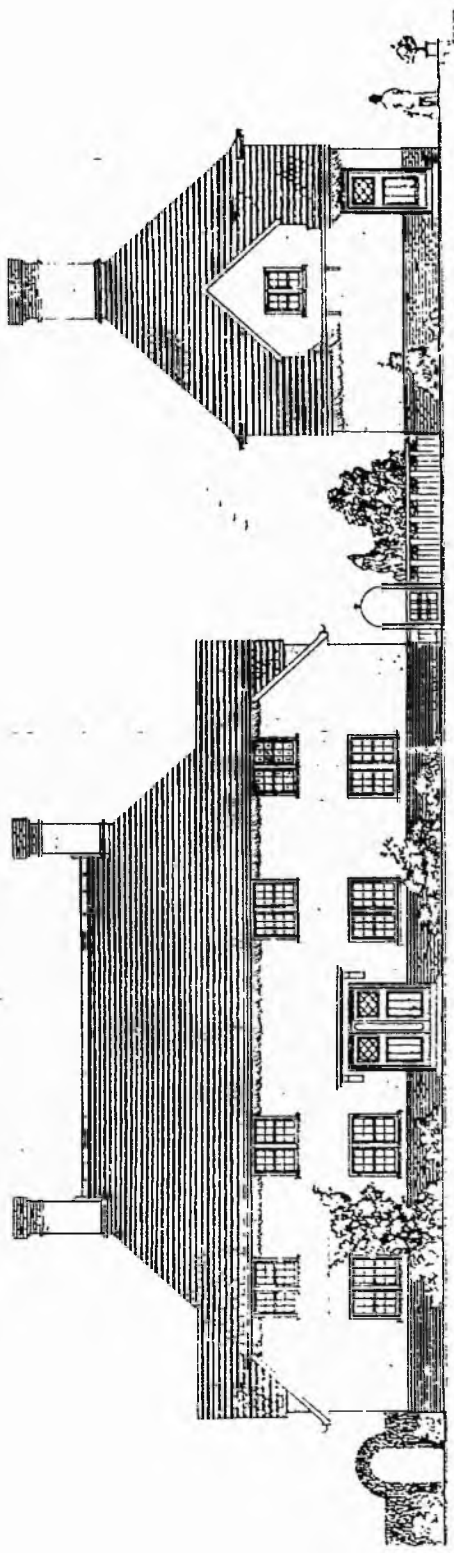


FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

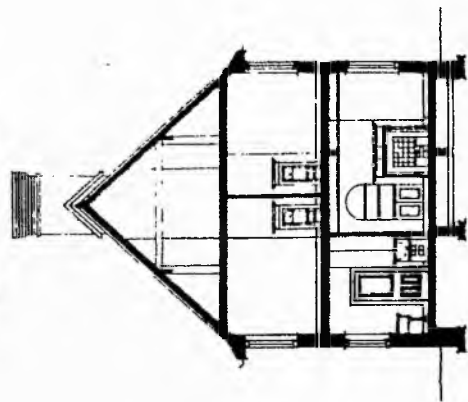
G.B., H.D.



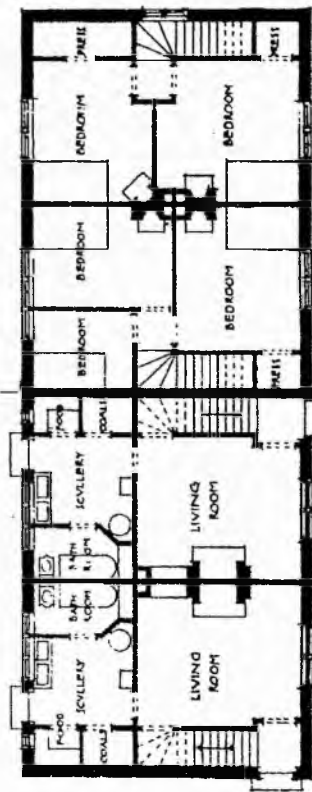
END ELEVATION

FRONT ELEVATION

GROVE OF FOUR HOUSES  
TYPE A



CROSS SECTION



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

UPPER FLOOR PLAN



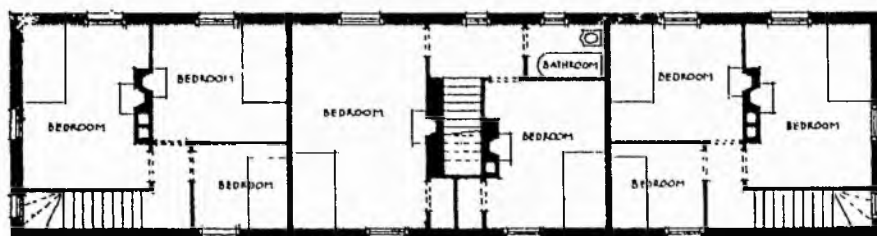
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD  
EDINBURGH



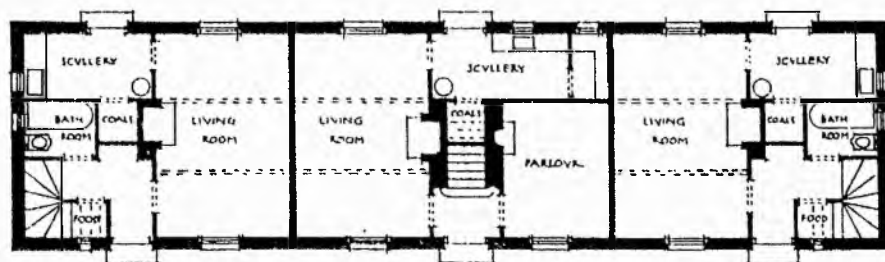
# GROUP OF THREE HOUSES TYPE B



FRONT ELEVATION



UPPER FLOOR PLAN



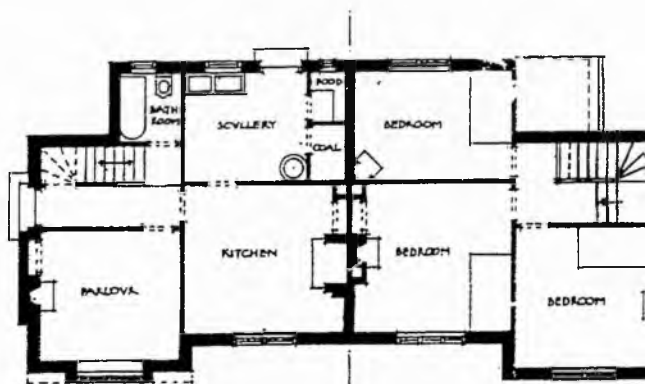
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE OF 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 FEET. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD  
EDINBURGH



FRONT ELEVATION

PAIR OF HOUSES  
WITH PARLOR  
TYPE C



GROUND FLOOR

UPPER FLOOR

SCALE 0"





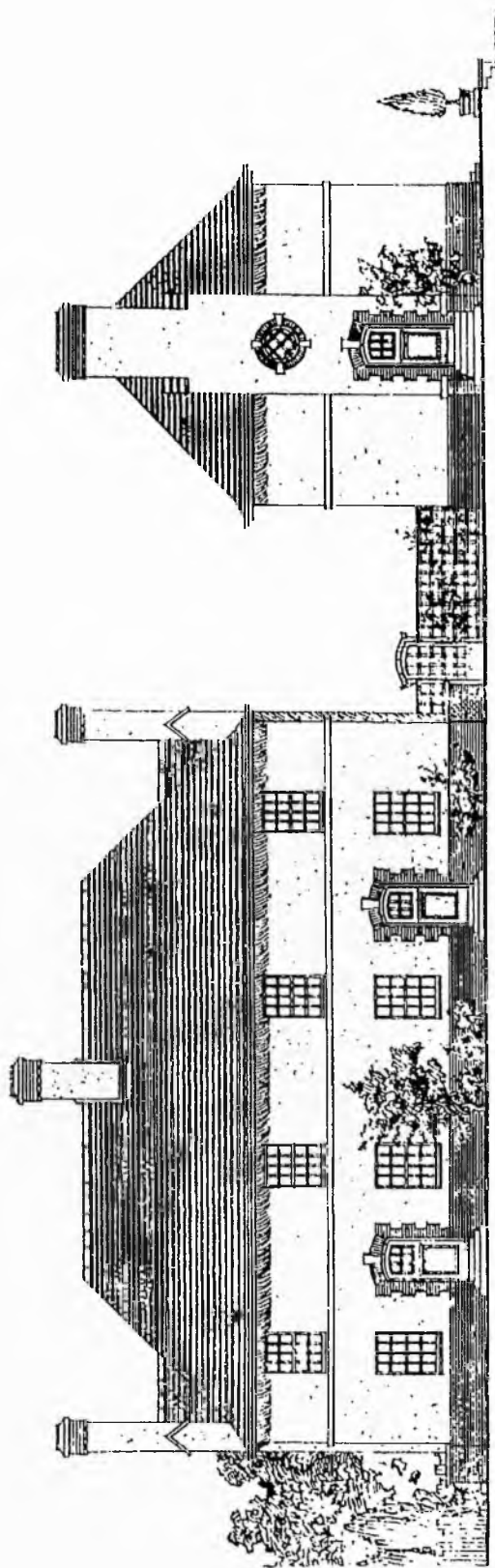
SIDE ELEVATION



CROSS SECTION



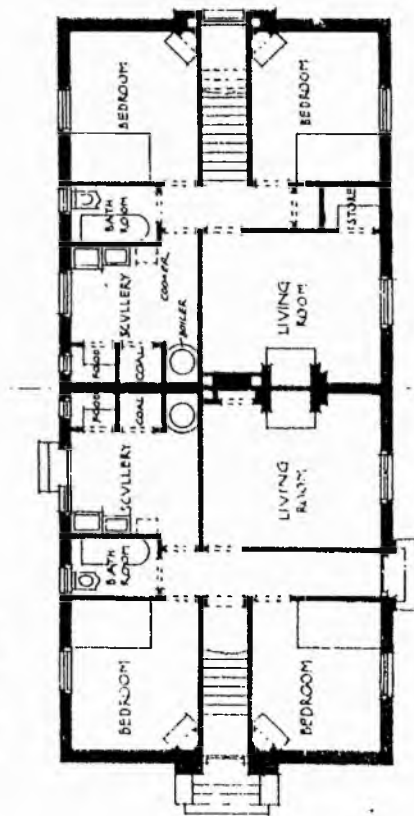
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD  
EDINBURGH.



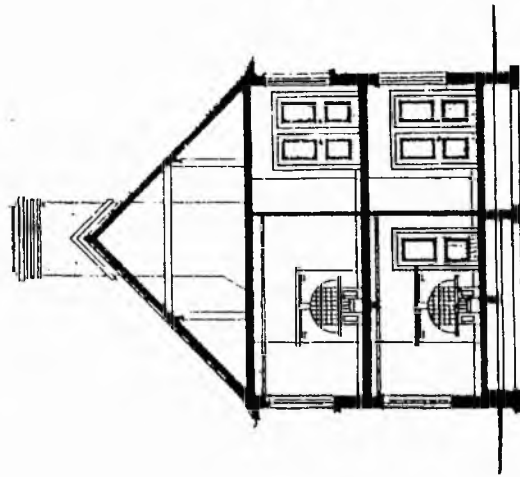
FRONT · ELEVATION

GROUP OF FLATTED HOUSES  
TYPE D.

END · ELEVATION



GROUND · FLOOR



CROSS · SECTION

LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
EDINBURGH

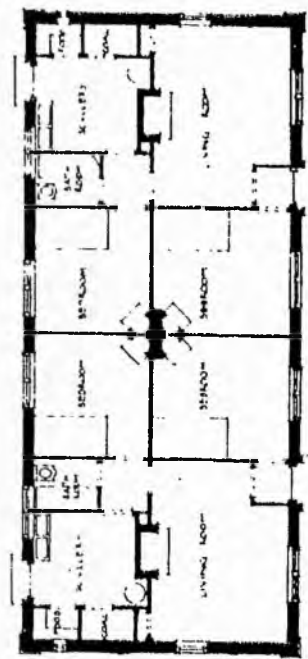


# SINGLE STOREY HOUSES TYPES E AND F

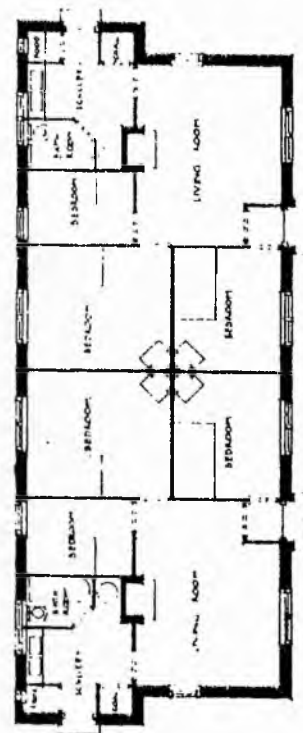


FRONT ELEVATION

FRONT ELEVATION



PLAN



PLAN









61. 3, 4, 5, 6, Erskine Square, Dunfermline. Three apartment flatted houses.

62. 7, 8, Erskine Square, Dunfermline. Three apartment semi-detached houses.







63. 9, 11, John Street, Dunfermline. Three apartment semi-detached houses.

64. 5, 7, Howard Crescent, Dunfermline. Four apartment semi-detached houses.







65. 13, 15, St. Andrew Street, Dunfermline. Four apartment semi-detached houses.

66. 9, 11, St Andrew Street, Dunfermline. Four apartment semi-detached houses.







67. 50, 52, Malcolm Street, Dunfermline. Four apartment semi-detached houses.

68. 49, 51, Malcolm Street, Dunfermline. Five apartment semi-detached houses.







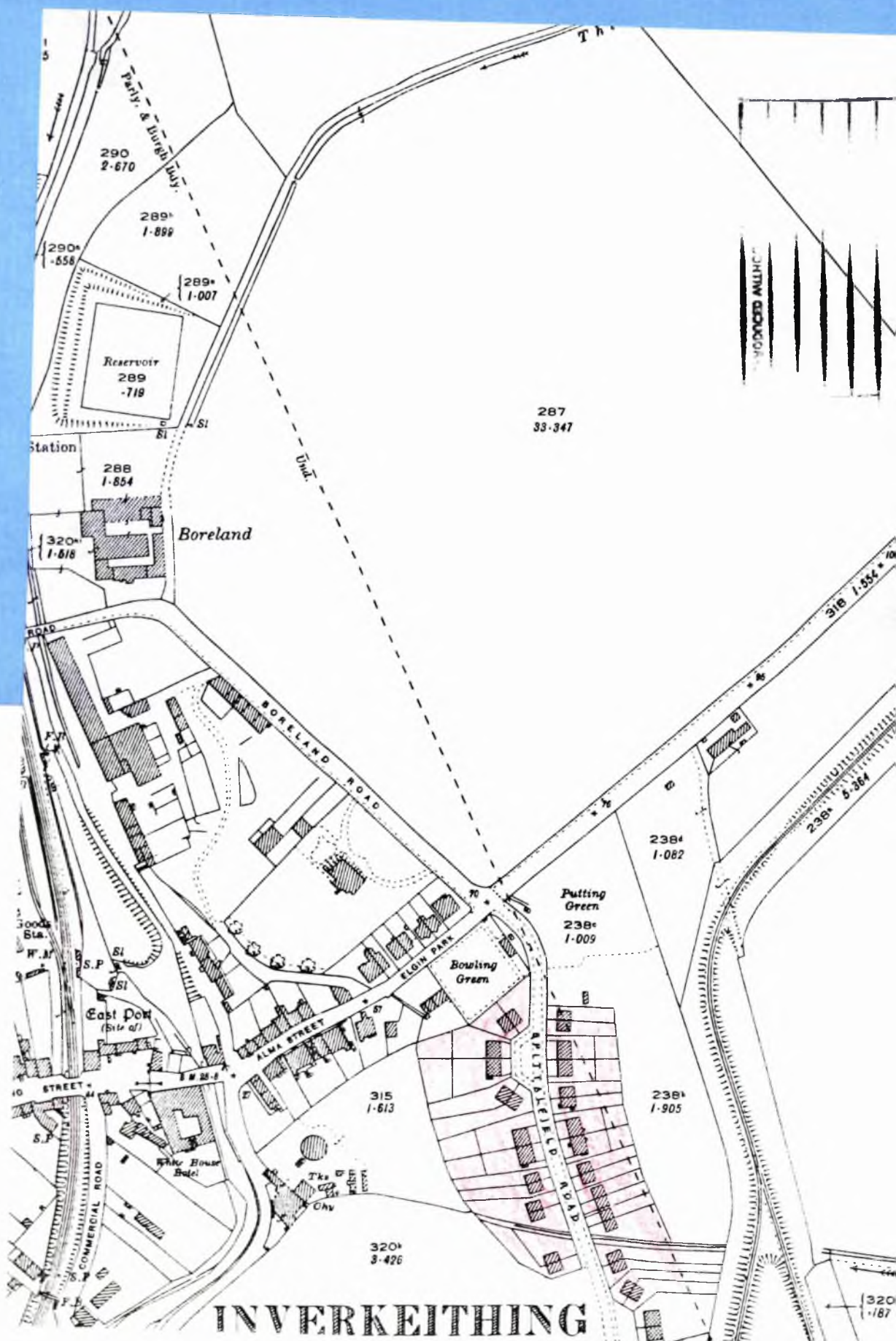
69. Frederick Crescent, Dunfermline.

70. John Street, Dunfermline.





71. Ordnance Survey map of Inverkeithing housing scheme.



# INVERKEITHING





72. 1, 3, Spittalfield Road, Inverkeithing. Three apartment semi-detached cottages.

73. 5, 7, 9, 11, Spittalfield Road, Inverkeithing. Three apartment flatted houses.







74. 30, 32, 34, 36, Spittalfield Road, Inverkeithing. Four apartment terraced houses.

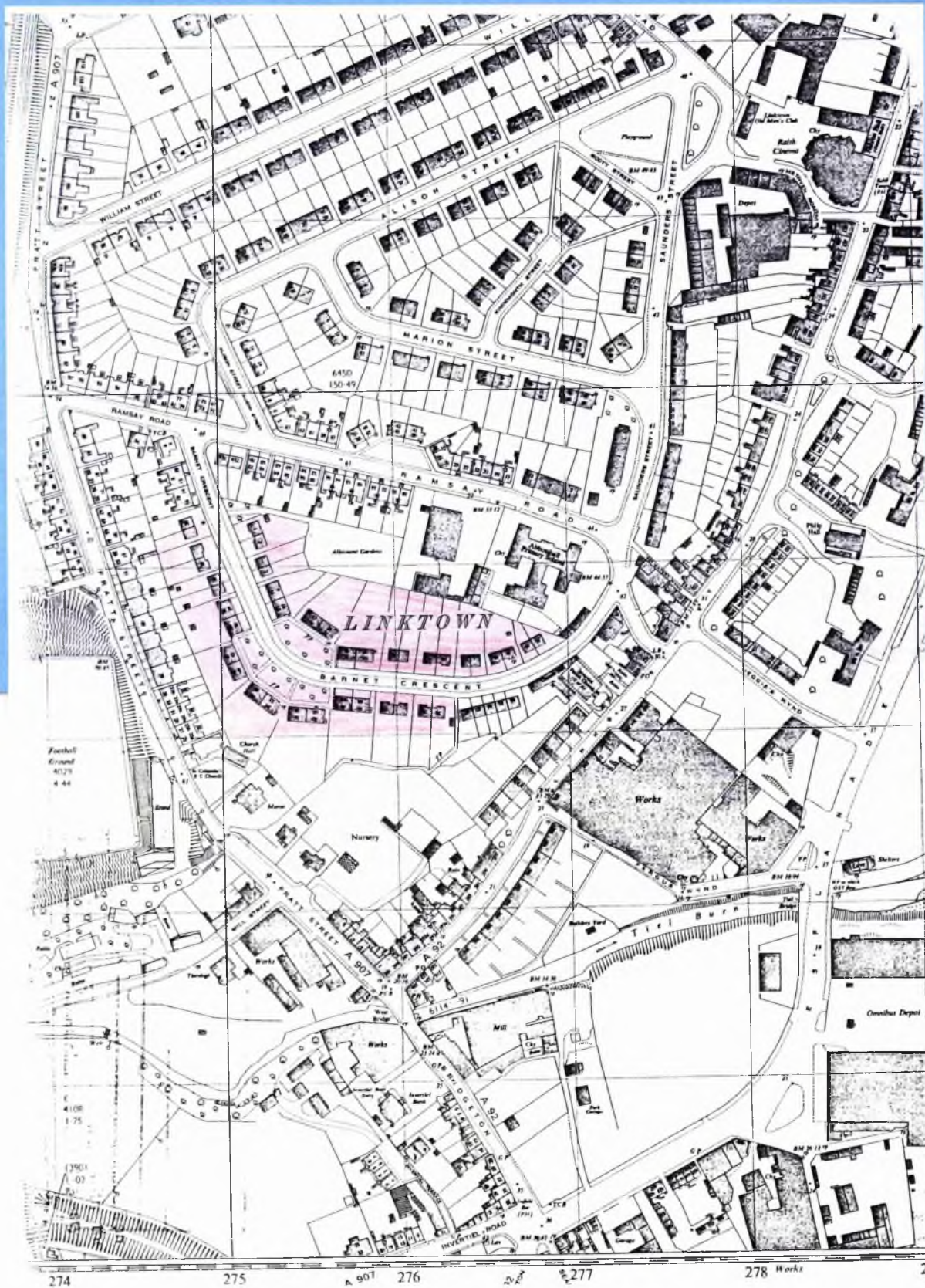
75. 46, 48, 50, 52, Spittalfield Road, Inverkeithing. Three apartment flatted houses.





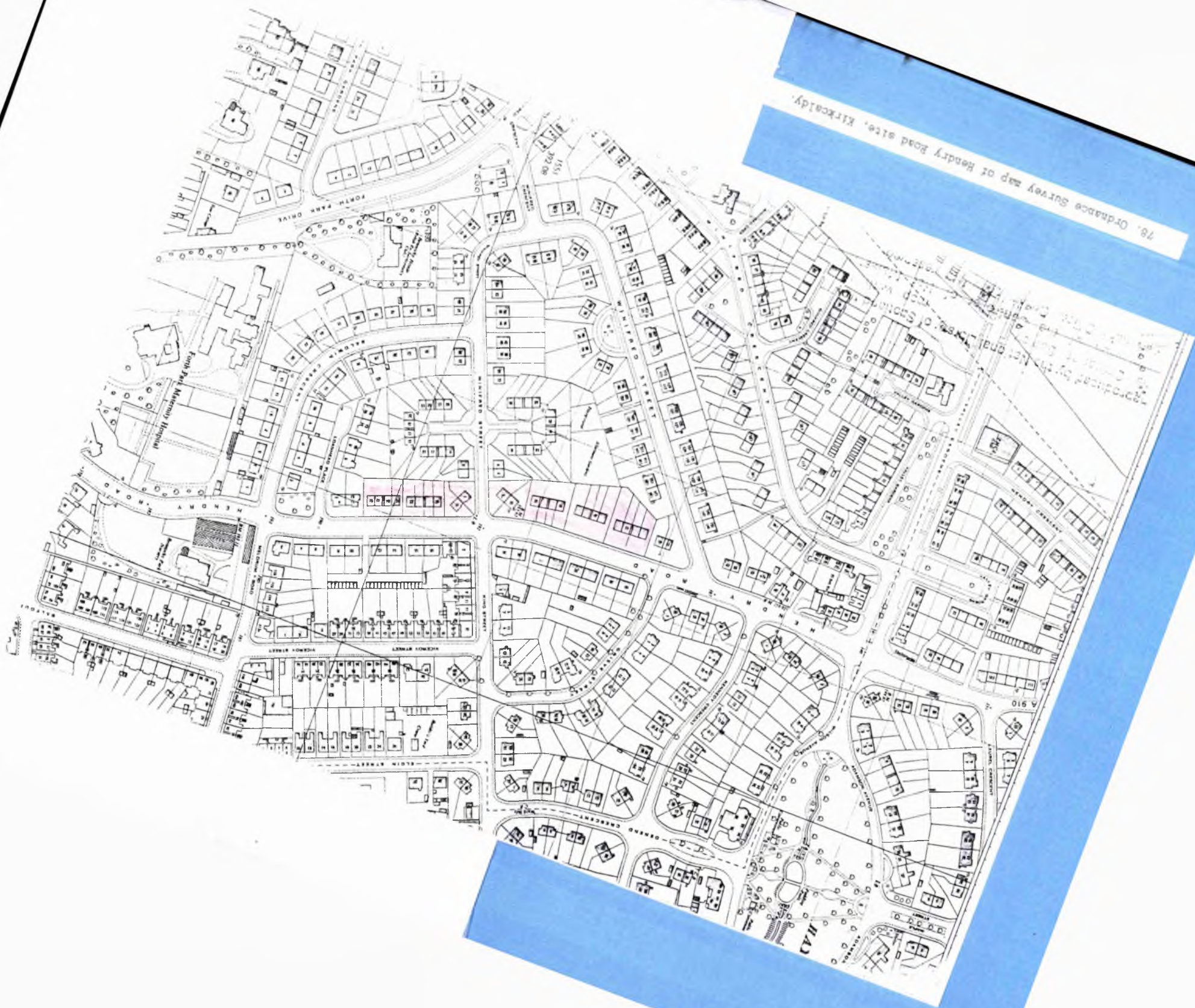
76. Spittalfield Road, Inverkeithing.



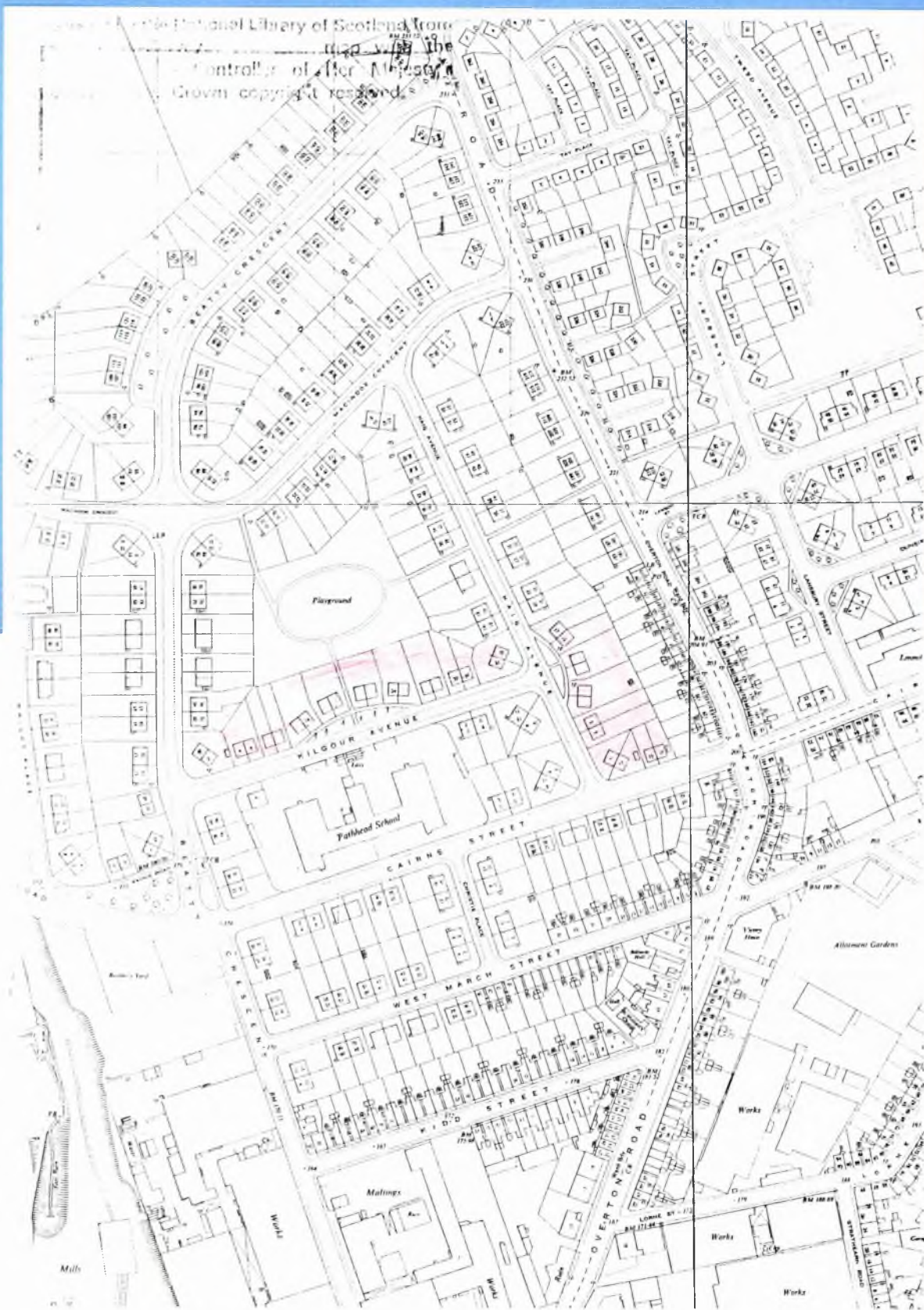




78. Ordnance Survey map of Hendry Road site, Kirkcaldy.











80. Courtyards of two-storey tenements, Hendry Road and King Street, Kirkcaldy. c.1900.

81. 44-62 Barnet Crescent, Kirkcaldy.







82. 5, 7, Barnet Crescent, three apartment cottages.

83. 48, 50, 52, 54, Barnet Crescent.







84. 51, 53, 55, 57, Hendry Road, Kirkcaldy.

85. 35-49 Hendry Road.







86. 33 Hendry Road and 2 Winifred Street, Kirkcaldy.

87. 3-17 Haiq Avenue, Kirkcaldy.







88. 7, 9, Haig Avenue.

89. 24, 26, Kilgour Avenue, Kirkcaldy, three apartment cottages.







90. 16-26 Kilgour Avenue.

91. 19-25 Haig Avenue, three apartment flats, 1924.





92. Haig Avenue, 1924.



Produced by the National  
Ordnance Survey  
in the name of the Controller  
of the Ordnance Survey  
on the permission of the Crown  
Stationery Office. Crown Copyright



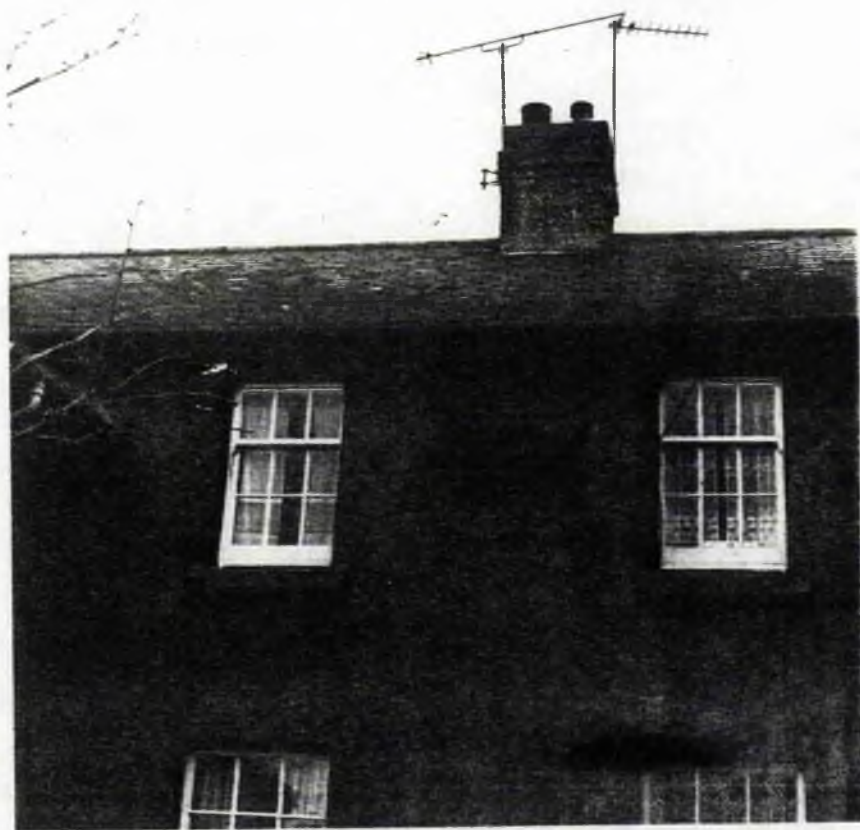
93. Ordnance Survey map of Buckhaven housing scheme.

Produced by the National  
Ordnance Survey  
in the name of the Controller  
of the Ordnance Survey  
on the permission of the Crown  
Stationery Office. Crown Copyright



94. 120, 122, Wellesley Road, Buckhaven.

95. 120, 122, Wellesley Road, Buckhaven, commemorative plaque.







96. 131, 133, Wellesley Road, Buckhaven.

97. Omar Crescent, Buckhaven.





98. 128-142 Wellesley Road, Buckhaven.

99. 31. 33. Omar Crescent. Buckhaven.











101. 15, 17, 19, 21, Bayview Crescent, Methil.

102. 15, 17, 19, 21, Bayview Crescent, Methil, commemorative plaque.







103. 27, 29, Bayview Crescent, Methil.

104. 10, 12, Bayview Crescent, Methil.







105. 6, 8, Bayview Crescent, Methil.

106. 6, 8, Bayview Crescent, rear view.







107. 2, 4, Bayview Crescent, rear view.

108. 18, 20, 22, 24, Bayview Crescent, Methil, three apartment flats.







109. Bayview Crescent.

110. Bayview Crescent, adjoining cul-de-sac.





With :  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup

## 99

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113. Scoonie Crescent and municipal bowling green. Club house designed by Haxton.

114. Scoonie Crescent; no's 4 and 5, Type E, three apartment cottages; and no's 6 and 7, five apartment cottages.







115. 32, 34, Scoonie Drive, Type B, four apartment cottages.

116. 24, 26, Scoonie Drive, Type C, four apartment cottages.







117. Scoonie Terrace, three apartment single storey houses.

118. 25, 27, Scoonie Drive, Type L, two single storey, three apartment houses.





119. Scoonie Drive from North Links.

120. 16, 18, Scoonie Drive, Type G, five apartment houses.





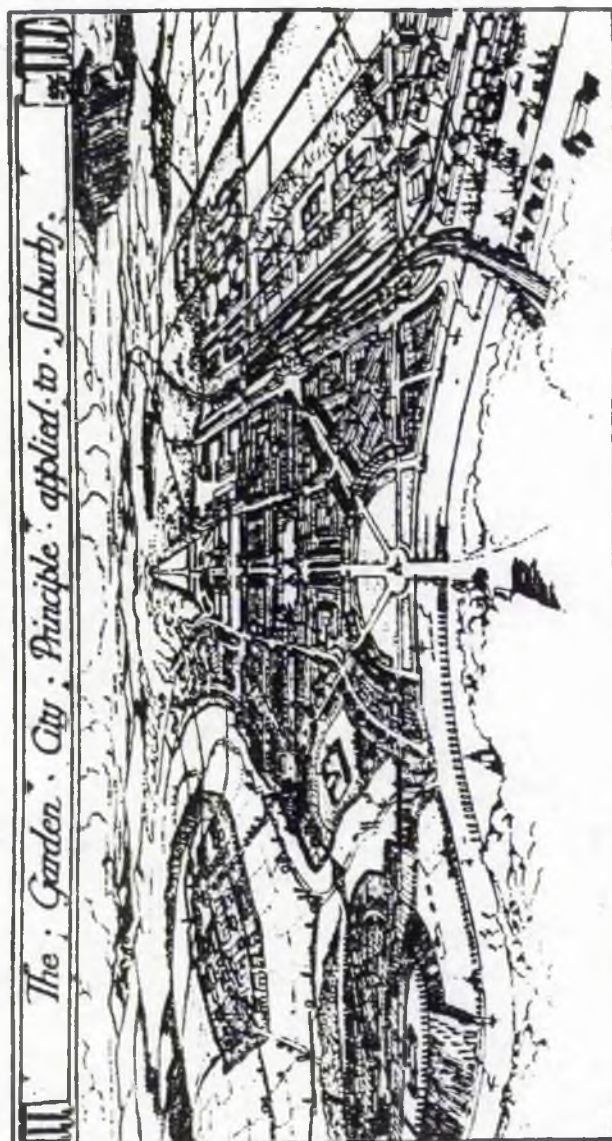


121. 21, 23, Scoonie Drive, five apartment houses.

122. 21, 23, and 25, 27, Scoonie Drive, rear view.







123. Mottram, The Garden City principle applied to suburbs, 1912.